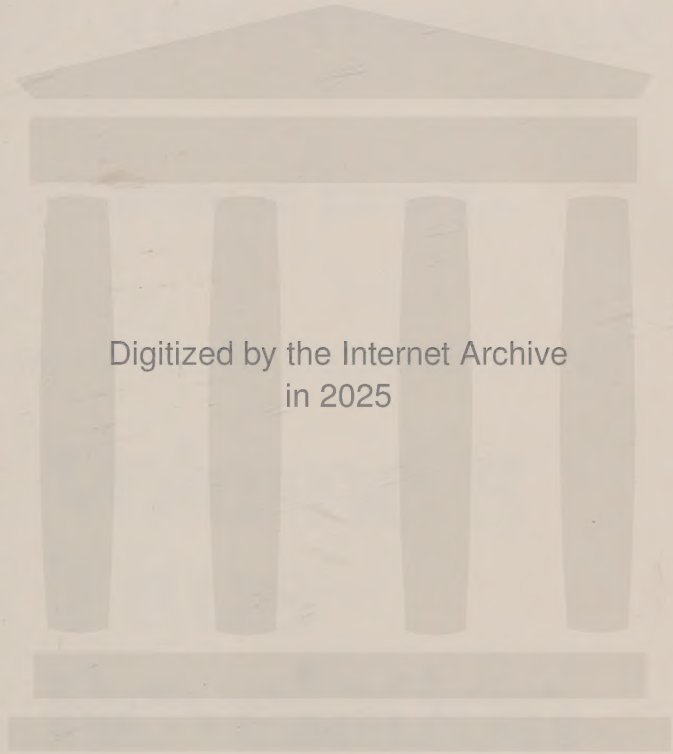

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COMMENTARY

ON

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Intended for Popular Use.

By D. D. WHEDON, LL.D.

Volume 5
Titus-
Revelation

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PREFACE.

The present volume closes our entire Commentary on the New Testament. It is a work which has occupied the mind of the author through intervals of a period of twenty-five years. It is with humble gratitude to God that he closes his task. The generous acceptance with which it has been received has been an inspiring incentive to his labours. The writer has, during that time, passed from the meridian to the evening-side of life. Yet he hopes that, with reader as well as writer, the zest of the work will be found as fresh at the closing chapters of the Apocalypse as at the opening chapters of Matthew.

The Commentary on the Old Testament, from the hands of a number of eminent biblical scholars, is in progress, and will, we trust, be completed by the close of another quadrennium.

For the notes on First and Second Peter (with the exception of the last of the Second Epistle) we are indebted to Rev. D. A. Whedon, D.D.

D. D. W.

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE

EPISTLE TO TITUS.

As the Epistle to Titus is a sort of abridgment of the First to Timothy, so Titus himself appears like a fainter edition of Timothy. Both were chosen by the Apostle Paul, as young men most likely to be a sort of *continuation of himself* after his earthly ministry should be closed. Hence his solicitude that they should possess and maintain the true type of his Christian doctrine, morality, and church organization. Paul calls Titus "my partner and fellow helper;" but of Timothy he had said, "I have no other like-minded." Of Titus we know nothing from the Book of Acts; and learn all we know from four epistles—Galatians, II Corinthians, II Timothy, and the present Epistle.

His Latin name, TITUS, indicates, but does not prove, that he was a Roman, as we know he was a Gentile. He was converted from paganism to Christianity by Paul, and so is called by him his "own son." He went with Paul to the Council of Jerusalem as an uncircumcised Gentile Christian, and was not permitted by Paul to be circumcised. The apostle had, indeed, himself circumcised Timothy, when it was possible so to do, on the ground that circumcision was a matter of indifference; but when, at the Council of Jerusalem, it was claimed by eminent leaders that circumcision should be a permanent part of Christianity, Paul promptly made Titus a test case. And when he was not compelled to be circumcised, the victory of emancipation from Jewish ritualism was decisive. Titus, then, had the conspicuous honour of being the typical uncircumcised Christian Gentile. Thenceforth the Judaistic party slowly waned, until it finally expired.

Titus was next employed in a more active mission, in which he won the apostle's high commendation. Paul, during his long ministry at Ephesus, undertaking to collect a pecuniary contribution in behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem, sent him, attended by other brethren, on that errand to Corinth. At the same time, being anxious as to the effect of his first severe epistle on the allegiance of the Corinthian Christians, he engaged Titus to ascertain about that matter

and to report in person to him. Under the pressure of failing health, Paul became intensely anxious for Titus to return with his report. He left Ephesus and went northward to Troas, hoping there to see Titus, but no Titus came. He then crossed the Hellespont and passed over into Macedonia, where, to his great joy, Titus appeared, and reported that all was well at Corinth.* The apostle returned him to Corinth, with his Second Epistle, to complete the work of the collections. With such ability and probity did he distinguish himself in this mission, that Paul dared confide to him the high responsibility of organizing and controlling the Christian bodies in the island of Crete.

But from the mission to Corinth (A. D. 57) to the vicar-apostolate in Crete (67) was a long interval, during which we catch no glimpse of Titus. Paul had meanwhile passed from middle life to a somewhat premature agedness, and Titus had attained the bloom of manhood. Together they were labouring in Crete, and when St. Paul left the island he left it in charge of Titus. How long after that departure, or from what locality, this epistle was written, cannot be precisely decided. It could not be long, for the epistle describes the work of organization as yet to be completed. It was written, perhaps, from Asia Minor, when the apostle was about to start for Nicopolis, where he proposes to collect a force of Christian preachers. To that assemblage he invites Titus; but whether the latter ever went to Nicopolis we know not. At Nicopolis, it is supposed, St. Paul was apprehended and conveyed to Rome. Titus was with him in his prison at Rome. But before Paul's trial he departed, doubtless for good reasons, to Dalmatia. There the New Testament record leaves him.†

Traditionally both Dalmatia and Crete claim Titus as their first bishop; the former faintly, the latter boldly. Candia, the modern Cretan capital, professes to be his burial place. There exists an ancient Greek fragment of a "Life and Acts of Titus," professedly written by Zenas the lawyer, in which Titus is styled Bishop of Gortyna. On the ancient site of Gortyna are the ruins of a magnificent old church of St. Titus. "St. Titus" was the watchword of the Cretans in resisting the invasion of the Venetians. When the Venetians conquered Crete, the antiphonal worship was adopted, in which the Venetians chanted "Holy St. Mark, defend us," and the Cretans responded, "Holy St. Titus, defend us." There is extant an able panegyric by Andreas the Cretan, published in 1644, possessing some interest. Andreas tells us that Titus was a descendant of the ancient

* Compare our Introduction to 2 Corinthians.

† Consult, with our notes, Gal. ii, 1, 3; 2 Cor xii, 18; viii, 6, 16-23; ii, 12, 13; vii, 6-15; 2 Tim. iv, 10.

Cretan judges, Rhadamanthus and Minos; that early in life he obtained a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures and learned the language in a brief time; and that he was present at the Council of Jerusalem. He loftily eulogizes Titus as "the first foundation of the Church of the Cretans; the pillar of the truth; the prop of the faith; the silenceless trumpet of the evangelic preachings; the sublime echo of the tongue of Paul." All this seems to show, that, however little this epistle compliments the Cretans, the Cretans contrived to be very proud of the epistle. There is an antecedent probability that Titus would, during the rest of his life after the death of Paul, retain a sort of special relation to Crete as its proper apostle, and the specific assignment of his connexion with Gortyna can hardly be rejected as purely fabulous.

By its position—a little east of the centre of the Mediterranean—Crete was in the highway of the early Christian missionaries. It had, as our map will show, Palestine and Cyprus on its east; Asia Minor, Patmos, with its sister isles, and Italy, on its north; and Paul touched upon it in his disastrous voyage from Syria to Rome. Cretans were present at the Pentecost; and how early sporadic clusters of Christians existed on the island we can only conjecture. Paul and Titus found them in their dispersed state, and it became the task of Titus, as instructed in this letter, to indoctrinate them in the orthodox faith, to frame them to a Christian morality, and to organize them into a body of efficient Churches.

Paul and Titus must have found in Crete a half-civilized, turbulent people, proud of their supposed antiquity, and intensely patriotic. Homer tells us of "the hundred-citied Crete," and its pre-historic judges, Minos and Rhadamanthus, were so just as to be appointed, after their death, as judges in Hades. The justice of their ancestors, however, was not inherited by the Cretans, as they were celebrated by the ancient writers for piracy, lying, and every form of dishonesty, and even at the present day they are described as "the worst characters of the Levant." The island was successively conquered by the Romans, Saracens, Venetians, and Turks, under the last of whom it now is, though aspiring for a union with the kingdom of Greece. The present epistle and the two to Timothy are called the Pastoral Epistles. Their whole tone, style, and peculiar phrases indicate that they were written near the same time, in the advanced age of the apostle, and a mature state of the Church. As a lesser composition covering the same ground, this seems to have been written after the First to Timothy; and as we know that Second Timothy was the last epistle written before St. Paul's martyrdom, this would, in the order of time, come between the two. As to its authenticity, the same remarks

may be applied to it as to First Timothy in our Introduction to that epistle.

It is sad to remark, that the Christianity of Paul and Titus proved hardly more successful in forming the Cretan character to a high model than did the justice of Minos and Rhadamanthus. The emphasis with which St. Paul insists on a Gospel which shall reveal itself in external life and character—that shall give honesty to the knave, purity to the unchaste, humanity to the cruel, peaceableness to the turbulent, civilization to the rude and uncouth—is earnest and persistent. He projected the bringing the reckless sailors, the wild mountaineers, and the cheating townsmen of Crete to a civilized Christianity. But with what a dexterity every thing of the practical and life-long element of Christianity can be eluded! Crete belongs now to the "Holy Orthodox Church," but a Christianized paganism has transformed the legendry of saints into a mythology; a luxuriant ritualism has sought salvation by trinkets and genuflections; a romantic reverence for sacred localities and mementos has substituted itself in place of the downright Christian pieties, virtues, and honesties. As through the ages Christian civilization has advanced, Crete has, doubtless, advanced; yet preserving the same sad relative immorality amid surrounding peoples.

ORDER OF THOUGHT IN THE EPISTLE.

1. **Apostolic Title and Address**..... i, 1–4
2. **Portraiture of the Suitable Eldership for Crete**..... i, 5–9
3. **Contrasted Portraiture of the Cretan Errorists**..... i, 10–16
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THE

EPISTLE TO TITUS.

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and [a]the acknowledging of the truth [b]which is after godliness;

a 2 Tim. 2. 25.

b 1 Tim. 3. 16; 6. 3.

CHAPTER I.

Apostolic Title and Address, 1–4.

1. **Paul**—See note on 1 Timothy i, 1. **Servant of God . . . apostle of . . . Christ**—An antithesis of the general against the special. He is God's **servant,** as a generality, shared with all good men; but **apostle of Christ** is his rare specialty, shared with a choice very few. The **and** of the English translation, which obscures the antithesis, should be *but.* The whole passage, after this divine *epithet* **apostle,** to the end of verse 3, is an expansion of the great import of that epithet; an assertion of the divinity of Paul's *office,* as based upon the divinity of the gospel system, with which it *accords,* and of which it is an integral part. It takes the whole three verses to fully express Paul's style and prerogative as **apostle,** preparatory to his **to Titus, mine own son.** Even then it is but a summary of his self-assertion in Part First of 1 Timothy, as shown in our Plan, vol. iv, p. 411. Hence this is an official letter—a certificate and a diploma, which apostolically authenticates Titus to the Churches of Crete, while it warns him to stand firmly and exclusively upon the high apostolic platform as against surrounding errorists. **According to**—See notes on this phrase Eph. i, 9 and Rom. xvi, 25-27. In that passage of Ephesians the Greek κατά, **according to,** occurs five times, as here four times—an occult proof that Paul was author of both; so occult, indeed, as to have escaped the critical commentators. We are, also, warned thereby from giving different meanings to the words in the different parts of this passage. The apostleship, as an institute, *accords* with the whole Gospel as a doctrine and a plan. Both, fitting to each other, form the divine system. This apostleship accords with **the faith of God's elect,** as being embraced therein in the belief of all the faithful. Hence the substitution by Alford (following Huther) of *for,* instead of **according to,** is not only unjustified by the Greek, but contrary to Paul's special use of the word κατά, and unrequired by the current of this passage. **The faith of God's elect**—Namely, that **faith** by which they become and stay the chosen of **God**—harmonizes with and sustains the apostolate; and if any professed **faith** rejects it, as does the prevalent Jewish fabulism, it is not **the faith of God's elect.** And hence the apostolate of St. Paul accords with **the** genuine **acknowledging of the truth which is after** (κατά, *according to*) **godliness.** The meaning is not (as Wiesinger, Huther, Alford, and others) that the apostolate is "for," that is, conducive to, **the acknowledging,** but that the apostolate, and a right **acknowledging,** correspond and are firmly bound together. He who questions the apostolate does not acknowledge **the truth. According to**—Another κατά, which all are obliged to render rightly. The apostleship *accords with* just that truth which accords with **godliness,** or *piety.* **Godliness** is a rectitude of heart and faith in communion with God, and under control of the Divine. Yet the divine name does not enter into the Greek word, which word is compounded of εὖ,

2 [1] [c] In hope of eternal life, which God, [d] that cannot lie, promised

1 Or, *For.*—c 2 Tim. 1. 1; chap. 3. 7.

d Num. 23. 19; 2 Tim. 2. 13.

(*right,*) and σεβέω, (*worship.*) and signifies *true devotion*, or *piety*. The words of Chrysostom, approvingly quoted by Huther, do not hit the mark: "Other truth there is which is not according to godliness, as truth of agriculture or trade." St. Paul's phrase is not opposed to any secular *truths*, but only to the *pretended truths*, though real falsehoods, of Gnosticism and fallen Judaism, with which both Timothy and Titus were to contend in their respective charges. For throughout this entire paragraph of St. Paul's self-assertion, the opposition of the Ephesian and Cretan **gainsayers** is silently presupposed. His office is in accordance with God's **truth**; their teaching is in accordance with a **conscience defiled.** Verse 15. **The truth which is after godliness**—It must be emphatically noticed that this accordance and identification of **truth** with rectitude is St. Paul's leading test of his true Christianity. To stay Christian, as he holds Christianity, is to stay (verse 8) **sober, just, holy, temperate**; to leave Christianity and relapse into heathenism, or run into Gnosticism, is to become like the Cretans, (verse 12,) or like the **reprobate,** (verse 16.) It is, therefore, not of mere theoretic or doctrinal **truth,** but it is of reformatory, saving, divine **truth**—**truth which is after godliness**—that he is, and Titus in his place must be, the unflinching champion at Crete. He purposes to raise Crete into a true Christian civilization through his Gospel and organized Church.

2. **In hope**—Literally, *upon* **hope.** But what is it that rests *upon* this **hope**? Alford, translating it *in* **hope,** misses by saying it is the whole clause after **apostle,** from not seeing that the whole passage to verse 4 expands St. Paul's **apostle.** Paul is **apostle,** according to **godliness**; and based *upon* **hope,** etc., to end of verse 3. The apostolate is based, not, as is the mission of the **gainsayers,** (verse 9,) *upon* **Jewish fables,** (verse 14,) but *upon* a **hope of eternal life,** eternally **promised** by a truthful **God.** This is his and Titus's platform over all rival systems in Crete. **Eternal life**—*Æonic* **life**; that **life** which belongs to the endless and glorious *æons*, ages, or time-worlds, of the future. See notes on Matthew xxv, 46; Galatians i, 4, 5; Ephesians i, 10. In this transcendent object of **hope** St. Paul's Gospel stood alone. **Cannot lie**—Literal Greek, *unlying.* Hence the assured fulfilment of the apostolic **hope. Before the world began**—Πρὸ *χρόνων αἰωνίων*, *before æonic times;* before the time-worlds began to roll on their events; from the anterior eternity. See notes on Gal. i, 4, 5; Eph. i, 4; ii, 2; and 2 Tim. i, 9. As Alford rightly says, against Huther, the same phrase in 2 Timothy i, 9 forbids interpreting it here as merely equivalent to *ἀπ' αἰῶνος*, "from of old." Luke i, 70. The promise, from eternity, is explained in our note to Eph. i, 4, 5, 9. From his very nature God eternally promises **eternal life** to all who come into accord and unison with himself. The temporal promises of eternal things in the Gospel are the external expressions of the true eternal promise. And so the apostle declares that the æonic **life** of the gospel **hope** is not a thing of to-day, but lies in ideal in the anterior eternal ages. And hereby is, perhaps, made clear the error of Huther, who tells us that if the phrase means *from eternity*, then **promised** must mean *decreed.* Just as if a mental *promise*, and that a conditional one, too, could not be as truly eternal as a mental decree! And he quotes the questionable authority of Calvin, who says: "As the phrase treats of a *promise*, it does not embrace eternal ages, so as to bring us to before the world began, but teaches us only that *many* temporal *ages* had passed since the promise was made." But the true meaning is, that there are the "promise and potency" of holy and blessed union with God himself for all who thereto consent in his own appointed way; an eternal election of all who voluntarily come into that election.

[e] before the world began; **3** [f] But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, [g] which is committed unto me [h] according to the commandment of God our Saviour; **4** To [i] Titus, [k] *mine* own son after [l] the common faith: [m] Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest [n] set in order the things that are [2] wanting, and [o] ordain elders in every city,

[e] Romans 16. 25; 2 Tim. 1. 9; 1 Peter 1. 20.—[f] 2 Tim. 1. 10.—[g] 1 Thess. 2. 4; 1 Tim. 1. 11.—[h] 1 Tim. 1. 1; 4. 10.—[i] 2 Cor. 2. 13; 8. 6, 16; Gal. 2. 3.—[k] 1 Tim. 1. 2.

[l] Rom. 1. 12; 2 Cor. 4. 13; 2 Peter 1. 1.—[m] Eph. 1. 2; Col. 1. 2; 1 Tim. 1. 2; 2 Tim. 1. 2.—[n] 1 Cor. 11. 34.—[2] Or, *left undone.*—[o] Acts 14. 23; 2 Tim. 2. 2.

3. **But**—Contrastive between the *ideal* and the **manifested** promise. **In due times**—*In its own times;* the **times** divinely held to be suitable for such manifestation. **His word**—We might have expected *it* as referring to **promise**, as **manifested**; but St. Paul uses the term **his word** to identify the promise with the gospel **word**. **Preaching**—Literally, *proclamation*. **Committed unto me**—Note 1 Tim. i, 12–17. **According to**—The third κατά in the paragraph. Paul's apostleship accords with "elect faith;" which accords with "godliness;" the **preaching** of which accords with the divine order. And the passage ends, as it began, at Paul's personality, showing that the whole is the import of the word **apostle**, so that at this point he makes transition **to Titus.**

4. **Own son**—Literal Greek, *genuine* or *legitimate* **son**; **son**, that is, by regeneration, as Paul does not hesitate to call even the humble Onesimus **son**, as being under his ministry converted. *Genuine* **son**, as being in his own true spiritual likeness; begotten to the Pauline gospel, and competent to represent and establish it in Crete. Extended as is his own style and title, that assigned to Titus is brief and simple. Note, 1 Tim. i, 2. Yet, as **son**, Titus seems to be made heir to a very full amount of apostolic authority, as appears in the very strong terms conveying functions in this epistle and in this chapter. Even if it could be supposed that Timothy was appointed pastor of but a single Church in Ephesus, Titus was certainly a super-presbyterial superintendent of several Churches, with their pastors, in Crete. He was, however, more an itinerant bishop than a diocesan. **Common faith**—**Common** to all the **elect**, verse 1. The sonship of Titus was not **after** the flesh, but **after** the **faith. Grace**—Note 1 Tim. i, 2.

Portraiture of the suitable Eldership in Crete, 5–9.

A miniature edition of the fuller picture in 1 Tim. iii, 1–7, the characterization of the deacons being omitted. The reason assigned by Wiesinger for the omission of the deacons is, that deacons are less necessary to the completeness of a Church. And no doubt the eldership is the main trunk of the ministry, practically necessary to a Church, and the deaconship and episcopate are less essential branches; important, but not necessary to a valid Church.

5. **Left I thee in Crete**—As he left Timothy in Ephesus on departing for Macedonia. 1 Tim. i, 3. **Set in order**—The Greek word implies a supplementary ordering in an incomplete work. **Wanting**—Left undone by St. Paul for want of time. **Ordain**—Constitute or appoint. Same word is used Acts vi, 3, where see note, and Luke xii, [1]4. The word itself decides nothing as to the mode; but undoubtedly all St. Paul's ordinations were performed with the solemn *laying on of hands.* Adverse criticism has objected that St. Paul's delineation of the eldership is not very complete or symmetrical, and that it says no more than Titus ought to have known without it. The portraiture consists, we may admit, of rough strokes rather than flowing lines. But it doubtless selects the points which most contrasted with the evil traits of the errorists; and furnished not so much information as *reminder* to Titus and to the elders. **In every city**—This implies that there

as I had appointed thee: **6** [p]If any be blameless, [q]the husband of one wife, [r]having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. **7** For a bishop must be blameless, as [s]the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, [t]not given to wine, no striker, [u]not given to filthy lucre; **8** [v]But a lover of hospitality, a lover of [3]good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; **9** [w]Holding fast [x]the faithful word [4]as he hath been taught, that he may be able [y]by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

p 1 Tim. 3. 2.—q 1 Tim. 3. 12.—r 1 Tim. 3. 4. —s Matt. 24. 45; 1 Cor. 4. 1.—t Lev. 10. 9; Eph. 5. 18; 1 Tim. 3. 3.—u 1 Tim. 3. 3; 1 Peter 5. 2.—v 1 Tim. 3. 2.

3 Or, *good things*.—w 2 Thess. 2. 15; 2 Tim. 1. 13.—x 1 Tim. 1. 15; 6. 3; 2 Tim. 2. 2.—4 Or, *in teaching*.—y 1 Tim. 1. 10; 6. 3; 2 Tim. 4. 3.

were many *cities* in Crete in which one or more Churches existed. Christianity had been known for some time in the island, and St. Paul's work had been revival and extension rather than first introduction. It was also Titus's work to complete the reorganization. His *alone* was the work of ordaining. If we ask why no old Cretan presbyter or presbyters were authorized to ordain? a reason probably was, that, if there were such elders, not one was fully qualified to maintain Paul's true apostolic type of Christian faith and order. A second reason may have been that an ordination, and the grade and office it authenticates, are more impressive and authoritative when coming from a higher organic authority. **I had appointed thee**—Titus was thus an apostle's vicar, by an apostle appointed to do apostolic work.

6. **If**—Perhaps it was a contingency whether many such men could be found in Crete, but the words do not necessarily so imply. **Blameless**—Possessed of such known innocence of character as makes imputation of wrong at the start improbable. **One wife**—Note on 1 Tim. iii, 2; iv, 9. **Children**—Notes 1 Tim. iii, 4, 5. **Accused**—Refers to **children.** There is a common but fallacious notion prevalent that ministers' children, instead of being after Paul's model, are worse than other people's children. A modern Greek proverb is, that "the parson's son is the devil's grandson." Impartial statistics, however, show that in this country, at any rate, the reverse is the truth. The fallacy arises from the fact that people demand a ministerial rectitude of ministers' children. When a minister's son, therefore, commits a gross fault, it is usually told with the awful *addendum*, "and a minister's son, too!" No one thinks of exclaiming, "and a lawyer's," or, "a mechanic's, son, too!" The transgressing minister's son will be remembered for a quarter of a century as standing proof that ministers' sons are the worst of young men.

7. **Steward of God**—Not a mere *employé* of the charge he serves, but a called appointee of God, certified through the ordaining hand of the Church. **Not**—The blamelessness of the elder is now described with five negatives, showing what he must **not** be. Compare 1 Tim. iii, 3–6.

8. **But**—Contrastively, the elder must possess the six qualities expressed in the text.

9. **Holding fast**—Passing from his moral qualities to his doctrinal firmness and abilities. **Faithful word**—Comp. 1 Tim. i, 15. **Taught**—From Christ through his apostles. **Able**—The elder must be a sound theologian, and a competent public defender of truth and corrector of error. The elder is thus the spokesman and *preacher* of his Church. **Exhort**—*Encourage* believers, inquirers, and all willing auditors. **Convince**—Refute, and produce conviction if possible. **Gainsayers**—Contradictors, whether in the Church or in the circle of listeners and attendants upon the congregation. As possessor of the truth of Christ, he was to judge, refute, and condemn all opposing heresy.

Counter Portraiture of the Cretan Errorists, 10–16.

10. Ample are the reasons for such ability, for opposers are many. **Unruly**—Repudiating the apostolic au-

10 For [a]there are many unruly and vain talkers and [a]deceivers, [b]especially they of the circumcision: **11** Whose mouths must be stopped, [c]who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, [d]for filthy lucre's sake. **12** [e]One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. **13** This witness is true. [f]Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that

[a] 1 Tim. 1. 6.—[a] Rom. 16. 18.—[b] Acts 15. 1.—[c] Matt. 23. 14; 2 Tim. 3. 6.

[d] 1 Tim. 6. 5.—[e] Acts 17. 28.—[f] 2 Cor. 13. 10; 2 Tim. 4. 2.

thority and doctrine, and setting up their own invented dogmas. **Vain talkers**—Utterers of the **vain jangling** of 1 Tim. i, 6, where see note. **Deceivers**—Mind-deluders, who cheat men's brains with fancy dogmas. **Circumcision**—Here, as at Ephesus, the main errorists were Jews. See note on 1 Tim. i, 4.

11. **Mouths must be stopped**—Not by physical force, nor usually by pure ecclesiastical authority. Yet, while church authority is less peremptory as to what private members believe, it is rightly exerted over what the minister whom it authorizes shall preach. In the present verse the meaning is, that the **gainsayers** shall be silenced by the ability of the elder to **convince**. Verse 9. **Who** not only seduce individuals, but **subvert**, that is, *overthrow*, (a Greek word physically expressive of *overthrowing* a building,) **whole houses**, or families. St. Paul, doubtless, speaks from memory here, of **houses** like that of the Philippian jailer, all baptized, (Acts xvi, 33;) or like that of Stephanas, baptized by himself, (1 Cor. i, 16;) or like that of Onesiphorus, administering to and sustaining him, (2 Tim. i, 16;) but **houses** unlike those in being subverted and drawn from the Church into the Jewish or Gnostic fold.

12. The fictions of these errorists have a congenial soil in the character of the Cretan population, as attested by **a prophet of their own.** The poet Callimachus, mentioning that it was said that the tomb of Jupiter was in Crete, responded, "The Cretans are always liars." But the real **prophet** who first uttered the words quoted by St. Paul was Epimenides, born in Crete about the year 600 B. C. He was held to be a **prophet** in the literal sense of the word as predictor of future events. So says a Roman writer, Apuleius, "Cretan Epimenides, a renowned foreteller and poet." Cicero speaks of those "who by a certain excitement of the mind, and with a liberated and free movement, predict future events, as Baris the Bœotian, and Epimenides the Cretan." His biographer, Diogenes Laertius, gives instances of his predictions, and says, that "some say that the Cretans sacrifice to him as to a god." He was invited to Athens to purify the city after its pollution in the case of Cylon. He is said to have lived to an extreme old age, and to have been buried at Lacedæmon. **The Cretians**—The generally profligate character of the Cretans was proverbial. To *Cretanize* was to be a liar, as to Corinthianize was to be a debauchee. See our vol. iv, page 9. They had a rival in roguery in the islanders of Ægina, and the proverb was, "A Cretan against an Æginetan." The three worst K's were said to be "Krete, Kappadocia, and Kilicia." **Always liars**—Suidas, the lexicographer, says, "*Kretanize* refers to Cretans, for they were liars and deceivers." **Evil beasts**—Referring to roughness and ferocity. The island once ruled by the just Minos became a piratical nest, and Polybius and Strabo tell us that the Cretans were unrivalled in making incursions by land and sea. Cretan soldiers were often mercenaries in foreign service. **Slow bellies**—Whose god was their **belly.** Phil. iii, 14. **Slow** implies sluggishness and stupidity, arising from gluttony.

13. **This witness** is too universal not to be **true.** St. Paul had not only read the fact, but he had seen it. He adds his own confirmation to the ancient testimony. It was not mere slander and witty sarcasm, but sober and solemn truth, with the consequent solemn duty now to be apostolically enjoined. **Rebuke** all these vices in **them. Sound,** or healthful, (see note, 1 Tim. i, 10,) in

they may be [g] sound in the faith;
14 [h] Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and [i] commandments of men that turn from the truth. **15** [k] Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but [l] unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.
16 They profess that they know God; but [m] in works they deny *him*,

[g] Chap. 2. 2.—[h] 1 Tim. 1. 4; 2 Tim. 4. 4.—[i] Isa. 29. 13; Matt. 15. 9; Col. 2. 22.—[k] Luke 11. 39; Rom. 14. 14; 1 Cor. 6. 12; 10. 23; 1 Tim. 4. 3.—[l] Rom. 14. 23.—[m] 2 Tim. 3. 5; Jude 4.

the faith—For it is a very unhealthy Christian faith that accords with lying, brutality, or gluttony.

14. **Jewish fables**—Note, 1 Tim. i, 4. **Commandments**—It seems strange that commentators such as Wiesinger, Huther, and Alford should uniformly say that these commandments were ascetic in their character, when gluttony is one of the prominent traits of these **slow bellies.** Nor does asceticism appear to have any association with the **Jewish fables,** though it formed part of one side of Gnosticism, (note, 2 Thess. ii, 7,) which is not the heresy here rebuked. Simon Magus, long before this time of St. Paul's writing, had no difficulty in blending a licentious Gnosticism with the Judaism of Samaria, and imposing his **commandments** upon a herd of followers, founding his licentious system on the assumption of the essential evil of matter. Acts viii, 9. Similarly, Nicolas, the deacon, (Acts vi, 5,) and the Nicolaitans of Rev. ii, 6, appear like licentious Jewish Gnostics. To the same class belonged the "filthy dreamers" of Jude 8. The **commandments** were the moral, or rather immoral, precepts of these men.

15. **Pure all things . . . pure**—Just so far as the heart is pure the eye is pure. The heart, under *complete* control of the law of purity, sees no effective incitement to lust in the external object. That control is the joint resultant of the divine law, the indwelling Spirit, and the firm will. Just so far as all concur, the world presents no objective temptation that wakes the sinful response from within. **Them that are defiled**—The **slow-bellies** of verse 12. Their inward nature is tinder, that takes fire at every presented spark; and the sparks are flying in perpetual circles around it. Every hour of the day objects are occurring to awaken lust, gluttony, rapine. Such men frame to themselves a dim theory of life that **nothing** is **pure,** and that all virtue is sham. To them no woman is chaste, no man is honest. All apparently good people are hypocrites; and your only honest man is the free liver, who commits all rascality and makes no pretensions to a moral life. **Nothing** and nobody is **pure,** just because they themselves are **defiled. And unbelieving**—Without that faith which works by love and purifies the heart, as these **gainsayers,** and **slow-bellies,** and their *subverts* (verse 11) were. **Their mind**—Their intellect, so that they think in accordance with systematic wrong, and believe that they believe it, in spite of an under-current of moral misgiving. **And conscience**—Their moral sense is abolished, (save the above under-current, which cannot be destroyed,) and a false **conscience** is constructed, by which wrong is seen by them to be *their* right.

16. **Profess . . . know God**—Rather, they *confess;* the verb implying the truth of what they acknowledge. They are monotheists, acknowledging the holy God of Israel. **But**—Contrastive. There is a contradiction between their confession and their conduct. **Works . . . deny**—Their actions ignore the God who requires holiness of life. **Abominable**—The Greek rendering of that most expressive Hebrew term by which the Old Testament designates that horrible blend of sexual licentiousness with religious worship of which the Phenician Sidon was the apparent centre, and Ashtoreth (the Ishtar of the Babylonian tablets and the Astarte of Greek literature) the idol goddess, against which all the force of the Jehovah worship was for ages arrayed. This was that "goddess of the Zidonians," denounced 1 Kings xi, 5. And the present **gainsayers** were the true successors of the old **abominable**

being abominable, and disobedient, [c] and unto every good work [b] reprobate.

CHAPTER II.

BUT speak thou the things which become [a] sound doctrine: **2** That the aged men be [1] sober, grave, temperate, [b] sound in faith, in charity, in patience. **3** [c] The aged women likewise, that

n Rom. 1. 28; 2 Tim. 3. 8.—5 Or, *void of judgment.* —*a* 1 Tim. 1. 10; 6. 3; 2 Tim. 1. 13; chap. 1. 9.—1 Or, *vigilant.*—*b* Chap. 1. 13. —*c* 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10; 3. 11; 1 Peter 3. 3, 4.—2 Or, *holy women.*—3 Or, *makebates*, 2 Tim. 3. 3. —4 Or, *wise.*—*d* 1 Tim. 5. 14.—*e* 1 Cor. 14. 34; Eph. 5. 22; Col. 3. 18; 1 Tim. 2. 11; 1 Pet. 3. 1, 5. —*f* Rom. 2. 24; 1 Tim. 6. 1.

sensualists against whom St. Paul—true successor of the prophets of old—arrays all the force of Jehovah-Jesus. **Disobedient**—To the true decalogue which the holy Jehovah, whom they **profess**, enjoins. **Reprobate**—Cannot stand the test of scrutiny as to being real doers of any **good work**. The word has no reference to an eternally predestined *reprobation*. See notes on 1 Cor. ix, 27; and 2 Cor. xiii, 5, where the same Greek word occurs.

CHAPTER II.

Portraiture of the True Christian Laity under True Teaching, 1–15.

1. **But**—Marking the contrast between the Christian laity and the **gainsayers** and their followers in i, 10–16; and a proper continuance of the portraiture of i, 5–9; that portraying the ministry, this the membership in their various classifications. **Aged men** and **aged women**, (2, 3,) **young women** and **young men**, with Titus for their type, (4–8,) are pictured *as they should be*, not forgetting the **servants**, (9, 10,) all in view of the divine future opened upon us through the dying Christ, 11–15. **Speak thou**—The portraiture is to be drawn by Titus' teachings. And really Titus is directed to form the entire Cretan Church in its various *cities* (i, 5) by his teachings; assuming that it will be done through the eldership whom he ordains. **Thou** in the Greek is doubly emphatic, by position and express insertion; marking a very striking contrast between Titus and the doctrinaries of the last paragraph. **Sound doctrine**—Healthful teaching.

2. **Sober**—The opposite of all extravagance of conduct or character. **Grave**—The opposite of all levity. **Temperate**—Implying self-mastery; the well-balanced control of *all* our appetites and passions. After these three adjectives of moral excellence, now follow three clauses of more strictly religious quality. **Sound**—Spiritually healthful. The three following nouns have each the Greek article: **in the faith, the love, the patience**, inspired, that is, by, and belonging to, the blessed Gospel.

3. **Likewise**—*Teach* implied, or, rather, supplied, from **speak**, verse 1.

4. **They may teach**—As Titus was to **teach** the elder, so the elder must **teach** the younger. Thus, healthful instruction may be transmitted through many successors. **Love . . . husbands . . . children**—Unlike the gainsayers and their licentious adherents, let Christian women maintain the pure domestic affections.

5. **Keepers at home**—Instead of οἰκουρούς, (*home-keepers*,) another reading, preferred by Alford, is οἰκουργούς, (*home-workers*.) **Good**—In temper. **Obedient**—Note, Eph. v, 22. **Own**—Emphatic, in contrast with Gnostic marital looseness. **That . . . blasphemed**—This clause, as well as the clause **no evil . . . you**, in verse 8, and the clause **adorn . . . things**, verse 10, all show the anxiety of St. Paul for the honour of Christianity, in contrast with the errorists of chap. i, 10–15.

likewise exhort to be [g]soberminded. **7** [h]In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, [h]sincerity, **8** [i]Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; [k]that he that is of the contrary part [l]may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. **9** *Exhort* [m]servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well [n]in all *things;* not [o]answering again; **10** Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; [o]that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. **11** For [p]the grace of God [q]that bringeth salvation [q]hath appeared to all men, **12** Teaching us [r]that, denying ungodliness [s]and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

5 Or, *discreet.*——*g* 1 Tim. 4. 12; 1 Peter 5. 3.——*h* Eph. 6. 24.——*i* 1 Tim. 6. 3.——*k* Neh. 5. 9; 1 Tim. 5. 14; 1 Peter 2. 12, 15; 3. 16.——*l* 2 Thess. 3. 14.——*m* Eph. 6. 5; Col. 3. 22; 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2; 1 Peter 2. 18.

n Eph. 5. 24.——6 Or, *gainsaying.*——*o* Matt. 5. 16; Phil. 2. 15.——*p* Rom. 5. 15; 1 Peter 5. 12——? Or, *that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared.*——*q* John 1. 9.——*r* Rom. 6. 19; Col. 1. 22; 1 Thess. 4. 7.——*s* 1 Pet. 4. 2; 1 John 2. 16.

6. **Soberminded**—Self-regulated, as against the wild impulses of youth and vigour.

7. **Pattern**—Greek, a *type*, a model, a living exemplification of his own sober teaching.

8. **Sound speech**—Both in the pulpit and in daily converse with men. **Cannot be condemned**—That defies the censure of the most adverse listener. **Contrary part**—The **gainsayers** of i, 9, who are Titus' immediate rivals and opposers. **No evil thing**—There is an immense conquering power in this negative innocence, that allows no hold to the slanderer.

9. **Servants**—As the subjection of the slave was not like that of the wife, based in nature and right, it was preeminently in his power not only to defend Christianity by innocence, but even to **adorn** it by a serene and hearty service to his master. As the Christian master could by a Christian spirit extract all the real slavery from the formal slavery, so the slave could give to his bonds a Christian freedom by serving in cheerful purpose of heart. See notes, Luke vii, 2, and 1 Cor. vii, 21, 22.

11 **For**—Over these precepts of severe Christian morality for the various classes mentioned, St. Paul now (verses 11–14) throws a sudden warming and glowing flash of illumination drawn from the glorious motives with which the advent of the Gospel inspires the Christian soul. A literal and truer rendering is, *For hath appeared the grace of God, saving* (or salvatory) *for all men, teaching us; for the purpose that, denying, etc., we should live, etc.* **Hath appeared**—Same Greek root, *ἐπιφανεια, epiphany*, as is used in 2 Thess. ii, 8 to describe the resplendence of Christ's own person at the second advent; here it is the resplendent coming of his **grace** at the first advent. **To all men** depends not upon **appeared**, but **salvation. All men**—Whether **servants** (vers. 9, 10) or lords. The **grace** is in its nature *saving* **to all men.**

12. **Teaching us**—That is, educating us to the holy model which Paul has been describing, (1–10,) and which he sums up in the closing part of this verse. **That**—In order **that.** The next words do not contain the matter that is taught, but the purpose or end for which the **teaching** is given, namely, our holy living. **Soberly,** in duty to ourselves; **righteously,** or justly, toward others; **godly,** or devoutly, toward God. **This present world**—Time-period. The terms **worldly** and **world** here are radically different words, the former of the two implying *κοσμος, (cosmos,)* which designates the physical world or world-frame, and the latter, *αἰών, (æon,)* which designates the moral system, or time-world. See notes on Matt. xxv, 46; Rom. xii, 2; 1 Cor. x, 11; Gal. i, 4, 5; Eph. ii, 2; iii, 21. We must deny **worldly lusts,** which belong to and spring from the frame of this world, during the **present** *time-***world,** in view of the future *time-***world,** and of the endless range of future *æons* or *time-***worlds.** And the

13 [t]Looking for that blessed [u]hope, and the glorious [v]appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; **14** [w]Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, [x]and

[t] 1 Cor. 1. 7; 2 Peter 3. 12.—[u] Acts 24. 15; Col. 1. 5, 23.

[v] Col. 3. 4; 2 Tim. 4. 1.—[w] Gal. 2. 20; Eph. 5. 2; 1 Tim. 2. 6.—[x] Heb. 9. 14.

looking of the next verse points to that glorious advent which closes the **present,** and opens the next *time*-**world.**

13. **Looking**—See last note. We are to maintain the holy model of 1–10 during the **present,** by a fixed and hopeful **looking** to the glorious future. **Hope**—A cheery name for the object of **hope,** the **glorious** epiphany of the coming Christ. **Appearing**—The same Greek word as **appeared** in verse 11. **And our Saviour**—By our present translation, approved by many eminent scholars, the words **great God** designate the Father, and **Saviour** the Son. But the large majority of scholars, ancient and modern, understand both the two appellatives, **great God** and **Saviour,** to be applied to **Jesus Christ.**

The literal rendering of the Greek words would be: *The appearing of the glory of the great God and Saviour of us, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us.* Now, as the words stand, if the two appellatives are to designate two different persons, some mark of separation should have been interposed between them. The author *ought* certainly to have taken that precaution. Our translators have so done by interposing **our** before **Saviour;** a scarcely justifiable method, for *of us* may just as properly take in both appellatives as one. Another method for the author would have been to interpose an article: *the great God and the Saviour of us.* Greek scholars claim, that by the laws of the Greek the two appellatives without the interposed article designate one subject. But such a rule belongs not to any one language; it belongs to every language; especially to every language having a definite article. Indeed, the principle requiring some separation of the two appellatives is based in common sense and natural perspicuity.

It need not be denied that there is force in the opposite argument of Huther and Alford. It is certainly true that the appellative **great God** is nowhere else applied to Christ. The instance *stands alone.* But there is "over all, God," (Rom. ix, 5;) "true God," (John v, 20;) "mighty God," (Isa. ix, 6;) and, as we think, "Almighty," in Rev. i, 8. Each one of these appellatives of supreme divinity also *stands alone.*

Alford argues that in Matt. xvi, 27, the Son comes "in the glory of his Father." But in Matt. xxvi, 31, the Son comes in his own glory. So that **the glory** of the present passage may still be **the glory** of one personality. There was a unanimity among the early Greek writers of the Church in applying both appellatives to **Christ,** and the verse was so used against the Arians. Alford seems to think that this polemic use of the passage weakens the value of their opinions. Perhaps it does. But is it not probable that this text had its share of influence in fixing the views of the Church before Arius appeared, so as to render the Church so nearly unanimous against his views? A proper delicacy in declining to use polemic authorities is commendable; but there is some danger of sacrificing truth even to over magnanimity. We are obliged to say that the natural reading of the words favours decidedly the reference of both appellatives to one subject. The words **Jesus Christ** tell us who is **our great God and Saviour.** And this exposition is confirmed by the following words—**who gave himself,** etc.—indicating that the writer had but a single personality in his thought. We would, then, read: The epiphany **of the great God and Saviour** of us, **Jesus Christ.**

14. The judge is a **saviour,** for he who sits upon the throne once hung upon the cross. **Gave himself**—Note, John x, 17, 18. **For us**—In behalf of **us. That he might**—The moralizing and sanctifying effect of Christ's death is here alone specified, because it is the moral model of 1–10 that St. Paul is here illustrating. This is the man-

purify unto himself [y] a peculiar people, [z] zealous of good works. **15** These things speak, and [a] exhort, and rebuke with all authority. [b] Let no man despise thee.

[y] Exod. 15. 16; 1 Peter 2. 9.—[z] Eph. 2. 10.

[a] 2 Tim. 4. 2.—[b] 1 Tim. 4. 12.

ward effect of the atonement, but not its whole effect. **Redeem us**—*Ransom.* The Greek verb is the same root as *lutron*, used by Christ himself in Matt. xx, 28, and *antilutron*, used by St. Paul in 1 Tim. ii, 6, on which passages see our notes. **A peculiar people**—Wholly unlike the people of i, 10–16; especially unlike the great mass of the Cretans characterized in i, 12; and inferentially unlike the mass of an unregenerate world, and **peculiar** in being exceptionally, **not unto every good work reprobate,** (i, 16) but **zealous of good works.** These contrasted words conclude the contrasted picture of each **people.** The word **peculiar** is derived from the Latin *peculium*, signifying a property or possession reserved as specially one's own; sometimes the reserve property a slave was allowed to have as his. Similar is the meaning of the Greek word here, and it emphatically designates this **people** as peculiarly *his own.*

15. **These things speak**—Solemn repetition from the **speak thou** of ver. 1. **These things**—The precepts of verses 1–10, and the doctrines of verses 11–15. **Exhort**—That is, incite, encourage, the docile to good conduct based on right doctrine. **Rebuke**—Refute, expose, detect, all wickedness of life and error in principle. **With all authority**—Derived from thy high office, from the great truths to be maintained, and from the purity, firmness, and dignity of thy own character and manner. **Let... despise**—Be such as **no man** can **despise.** Both in Timothy and Titus, St. Paul found qualities and powers capable of compelling men to respect their teachings and themselves, and would call those powers into action. The minister who cannot command for his cause and his character the respect of the community in which he lives, has probably mistaken his calling. Here closes, we think, the contrast in portraiture between the errorists of i, 10–16, i. 5–9, and ii, 1–15

CHAPTER III.

Miscellaneous Injunctions, 1–11.

1. Though the special contrasts between the Christians and the Cretans are ended, as noted at the close of last chapter, yet the admonitions of this chapter were called out by the special turbulence of the Cretans generally. Crete had now been for years subject to the Roman power, which was spreading itself over the known world. That power, despotic and conquering all before it, was, nevertheless, a mighty agency in breaking down national barriers, in bringing races into mutual acquaintance and unity, in establishing universal law and order, and so advancing the progress of civilization. Yet Gentile Crete, insular in position, was inclined to lawlessness and rebellion. The Jews in Crete, as elsewhere, were cherishing that spirit of hostility to Rome which resulted in a few years from this present time in the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish state. Huther doubts, indeed, whether there is in this chapter any special reference to Cretan turbulence, since other epistles have similar injunctions. Other epistles, however, treat the subject more doctrinally, whereas this epistle is throughout *practical*, with direct reference to surrounding circumstances. But Huther adds correctly, that such ethical laying down of the law was needed for Christians, from the fact that governments were heathen.

2. The apostle, it must be noted, is not laying down rules for political equity, but of individual Christian demeanour. He is not deciding that it was wrong for orderly Cretan statesmen to organize an equitable revolution for the overthrow of Roman domination, and the establishment of a free, well-regulated self-government of the island. He is simply deciding that Christianity does not abolish civil government, and requiring the Christian man to obey a

CHAPTER III.

PUT them in mind [a]to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, [b]to be ready to every good work, **2** [c]To speak evil of no man, [d]to be no brawlers, *but* [e]gentle, showing all [f]meekness unto all men. **3** For [g]we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. **4** But after that [h]the kindness and [i]love of [i]God our Saviour toward man appeared, **5** [k]Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved

a Rom. 13. 1; 1 Peter 2. 13. — *b* Col. 1. 10; 2 Tim. 2. 21; Heb. 13. 21. — *c* Eph. 4. 31. — *d* 2 Tim. 2. 24. — *e* Phil. 4. 5. — *f* Eph. 4. 2; Col. 3. 12.

g 1 Cor. 6. 11; Eph. 2. 1; Col. 1. 21; 3. 7; 1 Pet. 4. 3. — *h* Chap. 2. 11. — *i* Or, *pity*. — *k* 1 Tim. 2. 3. — *k* Rom. 3. 20; 11. 6; Gal. 2. 16; Eph. 2. 4, 8; 2 Tim. 1. 9.

legitimate law and magistracy in the interests of peace and good morals. Note, Rom. xiii, 1–7.

1. **Put them in mind**—Give them a *reminder* of what they *know*, but are ever inclined to *forget*. Morality is a simple science, if men were ready to acknowledge and remember its truths. **Be subject...obey**—The former term expresses quiet submission, the latter active performance of laws and commands. **Principalities**—The living magistrates. **Powers**—The laws and authorities. **Obey magistrates**—The lesser rulers. **Ready to every good work**, as member under authorities of civil and social life.

2. **Speak evil**—Literally, *blaspheme;* that is, revile or insult **no one**; prohibiting that style of obloquy usually exchanged in the rude Cretan neighbourhood. **All men**—In order to inspire the tone of a commencing Christian civilization in Crete.

3. **For**—This **meekness** in the midst of a violent community would be a very hard task but for the high motives the Gospel presents to encourage it. **We** were once as bad as our fellow Jews and Cretans, and have been **saved** only by availing ourselves of God's pure **mercy** through Christ. St. Paul here, as often elsewhere, includes himself with his readers in depreciatory passages. The vices here detailed are very much a repetition of the ideal of verse 2. **Foolish**—Gal. iii, 1; a defect of the higher or moral mind. **Hateful**—Deserving to be hated, while **hating** others. Upon this dark picture (as in ii, 11–14, where see notes) St. Paul now lets down (verses 4–7) a grand illumination, brought from the advent of the gospel of **mercy.**

4. **But**—Introducing the contrast between the depraved *previous* and the blessed **after. Love**—Literally, *philanthropy;* in the etymological sense of the word, *love to man.* **Appeared**—Made its glorious *epiphany.* Note on ii, 11. This refers not to the first preaching of the Gospel in Crete, but to the revelation of Christ at his advent to the world as Saviour of all that believe.

5. **Not . . . righteousness**—It was not man's **righteousness**, but his sin, that brought the Saviour and the plan of salvation. **By works**—Literally, *out from* **works**; as the outcome of **works. We have done**—The Greek is, literally, **not by works** in **righteousness which we** *did;* that is, *did* at the time we were potentially **saved. He saved us**—When? Not when we were converted, but when **the love of God appeared** at the advent of the Incarnate, (verse 4;) for **appeared, have done,** and **saved,** are all in the same tense, the Greek aorist, and all denote the same period of time. The whole work is conceptually viewed as completely done by Christ at his first coming. It is true, the vast process of our salvation is going on, and will not be completed until the second advent. Nevertheless, here as elsewhere, St. Paul's aorist conceptually contemplates the entire process, through all its means and stages, as one great act. See notes on 2 Cor. v, 14, and Rom. v, 12. **By**—As an instrumental means used by Christ through his ministry. **The washing**—Or *bath;*

us, by [l] the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; **6** [m] Which he shed on us [2] abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; **7** [n] That being justified by his grace, [o] we should be made heirs [p] according to the hope of eternal life.

l John 3. 3; Eph. 5. 26; 1 Pet. 3. 21. — *m* Ezek. 36. 25; Joel 2. 28; John 1. 16; Acts 2. 32; Rom. 5. 5.

2 Greek, *richly*. — *n* Romans 3. 24; Galatians 2. 16; chapter 2. 11. — *o* Romans 8. 23. — *p* Chapter 1. 2.

either the bathing vessel or the act, which could be performed secularly, either by plunging into the water or by the application of water to the person. **Of regeneration**—Not a **washing** that consisted spiritually of **regeneration**; nor a **washing** that caused or effected **regeneration**; nor a **washing** necessarily simultaneous with **regeneration**; but a **washing** which was *sign* or *seal* **of regeneration,** as its intentional and appointed authentication. Just so (Rom. iv, 11) circumcision is called a "seal of righteousness." It is a **washing** which implies **regeneration.** It is a sacrament; an "outward sign of an inward grace;" and the "outward sign" does assume that the "inward grace" already exists. In adults it is recognised as existing by faith; in infants, being *quasi* or virtual believers, as existing by the justifying power of the grace of Christ.

By the early fathers baptism was itself usually called **regeneration.** This was done either as using the sign for the thing signified, or as embracing both in one comprehensive term. Baptism was that external *act of faith* by which **regeneration,** as both an internal and external process, was completed. In this view the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration" is correct enough. But so external a use of the word **regeneration** *tends* to produce a superstitious trust in the mechanical act of baptism, as if it were a saving process, or an absolute condition of salvation. Yet it is in a good sense true that baptism, when *rightly performed*, does save us. See note on 1 Peter iii, 21. **Renewing**—We view the **washing of regeneration** as covering the negative side of our sanctification, namely, the cleansing from sin; and **renewing,** the positive side, the empowering and invigorating the soul to active holiness. Both these are, indeed, ordinarily included under the term **regeneration.**

6. **Which**—Refers not to **washing,** but to **Holy Ghost.** Spiritually, our **regeneration** is wrought by the *shedding*, or affusion, of **the Holy Ghost;** by parity, corporeally, we are **regenerated** by the *affusion* of the baptismal element. If baptism by water is duly to picture and symbolize God's baptism by the Holy Spirit, the water must be **shed** by affusion on us. **Abundantly**—Literally *richly*, not only in quantity but in affluent value and gracious liberality.

7. **That**—In order **that.** Commentators differ as to whether it depends upon **shed** or upon **saved.** By the former (Huther, Wiesinger, and Alford) the Holy Spirit is shed upon us in order to our heirship, etc. But that is tracing the grand result described in this verse to too special a point in the process described in verses 4–6. Make **that** depend upon **saved,** and verse 7 describes the divine outcome of the whole process. We, then, are **saved, by** means described in verses 5, 6, in order **that** we might be **heirs** of **hope** and glory. **Being justified**—As Alford notes, this may be rendered *having been* **justified,** and so be referred back to our first pardon. Or, better, we may identify it with the "justifieth" of Rom. viii, 33, by which God continuously exonerates the faithful believer from charges of guilt and condemnation. **Heirs**—What kind of **heirs? Heirs** (as divinely defined in the following clause) **according to the hope** not of a mere temporal patrimony, but **of eternal life.**

Concluding Directions Official and Personal, 8–15.

Verse 8 tells Titus what he must do; verse 9, what he must avoid; verses 9, 10, how he must deal with inveterate heretics.

8 [q] *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful [r] to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. **9** But [s] avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; [t] for they are unprofitable and vain. **10** A man that is a heretic, [u] after the first and second admonition, [v] reject; **11** Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, [w] being condemned of himself. **12** When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or [x] Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicop-

q 1 Tim. 1. 15; chap. 1. 9.——*r* Ver. 1. 14; chap. 2. 14.——*s* 1 Tim. 1. 4; 2 Tim. 2. 23; chap. 1. 14.——*t* 2 Tim. 2. 14.

u 2 Cor. 13. 2.——*v* Matt. 18. 17; Rom. 16. 17; 2 Thess. 3. 6; 2 Tim. 3. 5; 2 John 10.——*w* Acts 13. 46.——*x* Acts 20. 4; 2 Tim. 4. 12.

8. **This...saying**—Trustworthy is the statement; namely, the statement of 5–7. **Affirm constantly**—As the sum and substance of that Gospel which the errorists oppose, but which Crete must be made to hear and believe. **That**—In order that. Titus's constant affirmation of the Gospel aims at the end of reforming and saving men. The purpose of the doctrine is, to transform the pagan and the Jew to holy Christians. **Maintain good works**—By shunning the prevalent Cretan vices, and exhibiting all the Christian virtues. **Profitable unto men**—Making them holy and happy.

9. **But,** introduces the contrast of the **unprofitable** to the **profitable** of the last verse. These **foolish questions,** etc., (note 2 Tim. ii, 23,) are the reverse of the above **faithful saying. Genealogies**—Note, 1 Tim. i, 4. By them we cannot be **saved,** (verse 5,) nor **justified,** nor (verse 7) **made heirs.** They amuse, bewilder, demoralize, and destroy.

10. **A heretic**—A maintainer of the above profitless dogmas, yet in the Church, seeking to form a party. **Admonition**—That his are not Christian doctrines, and that the Christian Church is not the place for their propagation. **Reject**—Rather, abandon, let alone. And as the Church is supposed to follow its bishop, the Church will leave him to his own fellowship.

11. **Subverted**—He has ceased to be a believer, and has become, perhaps, a Gnostic. He has gone over from St. Paul to Simon Magus. He has ceased to be a true Christian, and has become a true Cretan. **Condemned of himself**—By his persistent maintenance of his heresy he pronounces his own anti-Christianity. He is, therefore, self-defined and self-judged. You need not utter any excommunication nor any anathema, he is **condemned of himself.**

12–15. These closing personal directions, if not written by St. Paul, must have been fabricated by a forger with great particularity, to make the letter appear to be his.

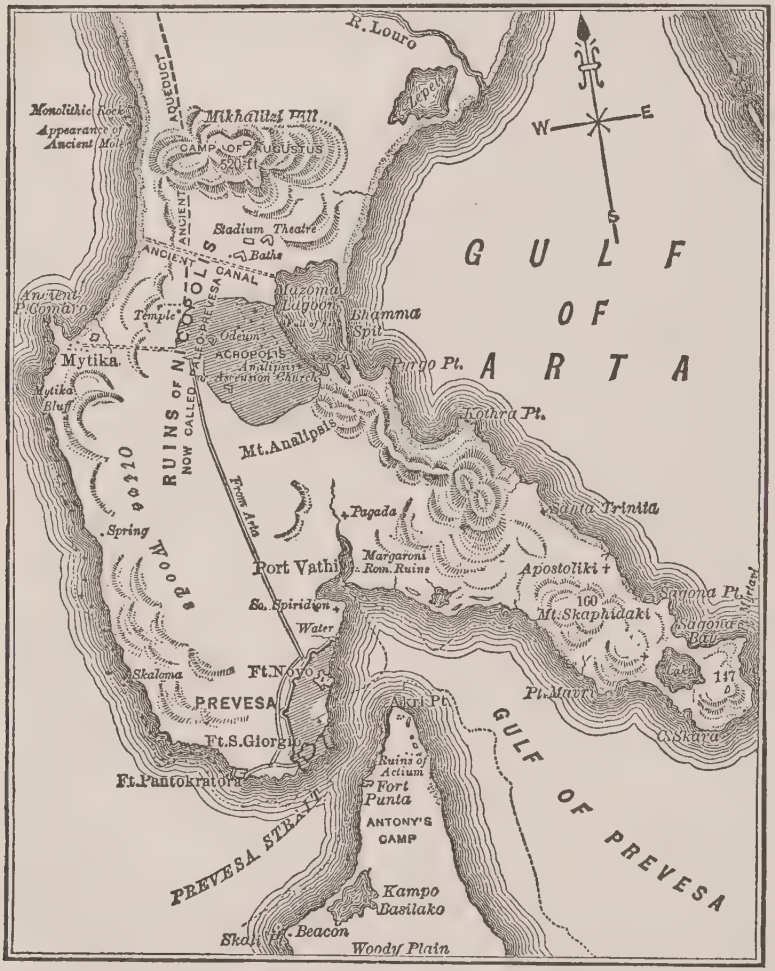
12. **Artemas**—Though named, and probably sent, for this high mission as superintendent of Crete in Timothy's place, he is nowhere else in the epistle mentioned. Tradition makes him to have been bishop of Crete. **Tychicus** was probably sent to Ephesus to fill the place of Timothy while the latter was visiting the apostle. See note on 2 Tim. iv, 12. So that a substitute was provided both for Timothy at Ephesus, and for Titus at Crete, on their leaving. **Nicopolis**—Signifying *victory-city,* was a favourite name bestowed upon a number of cities; but scholars are generally agreed that this

COIN OF NICOPOLIS IN EPIRUS.

On the *obverse* the head of Augustus, with the legend "Founded by Augustus;" on the *reverse* a figure of Victory, with the legend "Nicopolis the sacred."

Nicopolis was the city founded at Actium by Augustus as a monument of the *victory* by which he became em-

peror of Rome and sole master of the civilized world. This took place about thirty years before St. Paul gathered his little apostolic band within its walls. It was situated on the western shore of Epirus in Greece, and looked out over the Adriatic Sea towards the Italy and the Rome over which the



PLAN OF NICOPOLIS AND ITS VICINITY.

spot had made Augustus the lord. On its northwest it looked towards the Illyricum where Paul had preached, and the Dalmatia which Titus soon visited. The city was now prosperous, and its easy communication with the various points of the world rendered it a promising rallying point for Christian missions. Here, probably, Paul was projecting a system of Christian enterprise, and for this purpose invited Titus and Timothy to be on hand. Whether the assemblage took place we know not. Probably Paul was there apprehended

olis: for I have determined there to winter. **13** Bring Zenas the lawyer and [y] Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. **14** And let ours also learn [z] to [3] maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be [a] not unfruitful. **15** All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

[y] Acts 18. 24. — [z] Verse 8. — 3 Or, *profess honest trades*, Eph. 4. 28.

[a] Romans 15. 28; Philippians 1. 11; 4. 17; Colossians 1. 10; 2 Peter 1. 8.

and taken to Rome and martyrdom. **Winter** — 2 Tim. iv, 24. **Bring** — Rather, send or forward on **their journey.** Titus should, as superintendent of Crete, see that these apostolic evangelists should be provided with travelling expenses for their journey. **Zenas**—Contraction of Zenodorus, (*gift of Jove,*) as Apollos is contraction of Apollodorus, (*gift of Apollo.*) See our vol. ii, p. 11. **The lawyer**—A professed master of either Jewish or of Roman law. **Apollos**—This is the last mention of this "eloquent man," and fully shows that he was faithful to Christ and to Paul to the last. See notes on Acts xviii, 24–28.

14. **Ours**—Our Christian converts; who should learn to be liberal contributors as well as Titus. **Good works for necessary uses**—Benevolent contributions to **necessary** expenses. **Unfruitful** — Unproductive of benefit to the Church and world. He who is fruitful in holy emotions and holy professions should never be barren in liberal benefactions.

15. **All...with me**—Though Paul now calls Titus and others to him, there are a number **with** him. These were his retinue (see notes Acts xx, 4, and xxi, 18) of fellow-labourers. They came and went by his direction. **Love us**—Christian acquaintances who specially cherished his remembrance. **You all**—Not **all** the Churches of Crete, but **all** the attendant labourers of Titus. It was a salutation from Paul's retinue to Titus. The subscription affirming that the epistle was written from Nicopolis is clearly erroneous, as is shown by the word **there** in verse 12.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

This epistle is a beautiful pendant to Colossians. It is written from the same Roman prison, sent by the same messengers, to the same Asiatic city. Philemon is not greeted among the greeted Colossians, because he has an entire epistle devoted to himself and his. We know, therefore, the date and the circumstantials of this letter.

Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, of high qualifications, having run away from his master took refuge at Rome, and was there converted under the ministry of St. Paul. Nothing could be more forlorn than the condition, or more desperate than the associates, of a loose slave in the slums of the Roman capital; and as Onesimus was acquainted, doubtless, with Paul, at least by reputation, it was quite natural that the fugitive should take refuge with him, feel contrition for his sins, and accept the religion of the apostle and of his master. The apostle's heart was deeply touched by the penitence of Onesimus, feeling for him a parental affection as a spiritual father, and realizing his future value in consequence of his conversion. This feeling of valuation is evinced by the fact that Paul named him, slave as he was, with honour in his Epistle to Colosse, as "a faithful and beloved brother." He nevertheless, foregoes the advantage of his ministry with himself at Rome, and sends him back to Philemon with this letter. As it is a great boon he is asking of Philemon—nothing less than reception, pardon, and emancipation—the letter tasks the strongest powers and deepest feelings of the apostle's head and heart. He opens with a cordial greeting to Philemon and his associates; passes a high eulogy on the Christian character of his friend; earnestly supplicates that Onesimus may be received as a brother, not as a slave; indicates his hopes of his future usefulness; pledges himself to right all the wrong he had done; and implores Philemon, by his own spiritual debt of conversion, to receive Onesimus as he would Paul himself. Perfectly aware, as we are, that the current of commentators denies that St. Paul indicated emancipation, we see not the first good reason to doubt the fact. To suppose that it required all this energy of expostulation

on the part of our great apostle to induce the devout and generous Philemon to receive his returned and converted fugitive without inflicting death, torture, or the branding iron, according to Roman law, is, on the face of it, to suppose him worse than a respectable heathen slaveholder. On the contrary, the reverse view throws a luminous beauty over the whole epistle. And in connexion with this should be taken the clear and more than ordinarily trustworthy traditions in regard to the honourable subsequent history of Onesimus. Says Alford:—

"In the apostolic Canons he is said to have been emancipated by his master, and in the apostolic Constitutions to have been ordained by Paul himself Bishop of Berœa in Macedonia, and to have suffered martyrdom in Rome.—*Niceph.* A. E., iii, 11. In the Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians, we read, chap. i, p. 645, 'I have received, therefore, your whole community in the name of God, through Onesimus, a man of inexpressible love, and your bishop in the flesh, whom I pray you by Jesus Christ you would love, and that you would all seek to be like him. And blessed be He who has granted unto you, being worthy, to obtain such a bishop.' It is just possible that this may be our Onesimus. The earliest date which can be assigned to the martyrdom of Ignatius is A. D. 107; that is thirty-five years after the date of this epistle, supposing Onesimus to have then been only sixty-five. And even setting Ignatius's death at the latest date, A. D. 116, we should still be far within the limits of possibility. It is at least singular that in chap. ii, p. 645, immediately after naming Onesimus, Ignatius proceeds, 'I would be refreshed of you always.' Compare Phil. 20."

Eusebius classes this epistle among the *unquestioned* in antiquity, and it is quoted by Tertullian, Origen, and Jerome. The fact that, as noted on the first verse, it was addressed not only to Philemon but to the Church at his house, gave this epistle a churchly reading, (see on vol. iii, p. 5,) and thereby secured its publicity and its perpetuation in the New Testament canon. It has ever been held to be a rare specimen of the epistolary for its skilful address, its delicacy, and the depth of its Christianity.

THE

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

PAUL, [a]a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, [b]and fellow labourer, **2** And to *our* beloved Apphia, and [c]Archippus [d]our fellow soldier, and to

a Eph. 3. 1; 4. 1; 2 Tim. 1. 8; verse 9.

b Phil. 2. 25.—*c* Col. 4. 17.—*d* Phil. 2. 25.

NOTES ON PHILEMON.

Address and Greeting, 1-3.

By a pleasant climax St. Paul includes in his address not only Philemon, but his household and his *house-church*. Yet as soon as the greeting closes, he drops all reference not only to his own associate, Timothy, but to all addressed, save Philemon alone. He cannot address a note to Philemon and leave Philemon's Christian circle unnoticed. In that circle St. Paul is truly at home; with gentle humour he plays upon their names; and he unceremoniously directs them to prepare lodgings for himself, not doubting that his personal coming is an object of their prayers.

1. **Prisoner of Jesus Christ**—Note on Ephesians iii, 1. A playful parody here on his higher title of apostle of Christ. We may safely assume that St. Paul habitually applied this phrase to himself with genial pleasantry, while imprisoned, as a title at once of humility and honour. Bp. Wordsworth piquantly remarks, "There was some appropriateness in introducing himself as a 'bondsman of Christ,' in a letter where he pleads the cause of a bond-slave." **Timothy our** (or, rather, *the*) **brother.** Timothy, when addressed by Paul, was a *son;* when named to others, was elevated to the style of **brother. Fellow labourer**—In noting St. Paul's play upon the names of these friends, observe that Philemon means *friendly*, Archippus means *cavalry captain*, and Onesimus means *profitable*. Hence the first is his co-worker, the second is his **fellow soldier,** and the third was once (verse 11) **unprofitable.** Cowper, the poet, rebuking the witticisms of clergymen, places St. Paul before them as a model of perpetual seriousness; giving them leave, if they can find one playful passage in his writings, to preach jokes forever. The pleasantries of this epistle suggest that Cowper's taste was slightly over-puritanical, and give us the idea that, in his circle of private friends, St. Paul, while holding his apostleship ever visible in the background, was often a cheery companion. Genial pleasantry, avoiding broad levity, vulgarity, indecency, and malignity, is an amiable and Christian quality. It is healthful to mind and body, takes repulsiveness from piety, and sheds a rightful happiness around the circle. How, where, and when Philemon had been Paul's **fellow labourer,** is unknown. It is not clear that Paul had ever been at Colosse; but Philemon may have been his convert, and subsequent assistant in establishing Christianity in the neighbouring city of Ephesus.

2. **Apphia**—The Roman name Appia; doubtless designating Philemon's wife. Tradition honours her as a martyr with her husband. **Archippus**—Signifying "*master of horse*," and so Paul's **fellow soldier.** This heroic title confirms the belief that Col. iv. 17 (where see note) was a word of cheer to him, and not of reproof. **Church in thy house**—Notes on Rom. xvi, 5; 1 Cor. xvi, 19; and Col. iv, 15. From the last passage it is certain that there were at least two house-churches in Colosse. Probably there were several,

[e] the Church in thy house: **3** [f] Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 [g] I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, **5** [h] Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; **6** That the communication of thy faith may become effectual [i] by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. **7** For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints [k] are refreshed by thee, brother.

8 Wherefore, [l] though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin

[e] Rom. 16. 5; 1 Cor. 16. 19.—[f] Eph. 1. 2.—[g] Eph. 1. 16; 1 Thess. 1. 2; 2 Thess. 1. 3.—[h] Eph. 1. 15; Col. 1. 4.—[i] Phil. 1. 9, 11.—[k] 2 Cor. 7. 13; 2 Tim. 1. 16; ver. 20.—[l] 1 Thess. 2. 6.

each with its own churchly organization, and collectively forming the Church of Colosse addressed by St. Paul's epistle. A number of house-congregations would require several sets of elders and deacons; which would naturally require a president-presbyter or bishop for the city, including suburbs. A wealthier member supplied a room, or, perhaps, the court of his house; and his home became a "meeting-house," a "church." The Greek commentator, Theodoret, fifth century, says: "Philemon was a citizen of Colossæ, and his house still remains in that city." Its double character as church and residence might render it memorable and traditional. Though the matter of Onesimus was personal between St. Paul and Philemon alone, yet it would possess an interest for the entire coterie that met for worship in Philemon's court. An epistle from the great apostle, and glad news from the fugitive Onesimus, would raise a stir in the hearts of the little band, and form rich topic for listening ears and praying lips.

Devout recognition of the richness of Phil mon's Christian character, 4–7.

From this point all are forgotten but Philemon, who is addressed in the second person singular. And preparatory to the great request of verse 10 Paul testifies the high tone of Philemon's Christianity, grounding the request in his Christian fellowship.

4. **My God**—Note, Acts xxvii, 23. **Always** qualifies **thank.**

5. **Hearing**—This participle is, in the Greek, a continuous present; constantly **hearing,** and so moved to **make mention of you in my prayers.** Thanks for his convert's present piety prompted prayer for his higher spiritual attainments. Philemon, he heard, manifested **faith,** not only **toward the Lord Jesus,** but he manifested his **faith** in Jesus **toward all saints.**

6. **That**—Depending on **prayers** in last verse, showing for what St. Paul prayed in Philemon's behalf. **Communication** — Rather, communion, or common sharing with others in some one interest. **Thy faith**—Greek, *the faith*, showing the interest in which the communion was. Render the phrase thus: *The communion of the faith.* **You** —The proper reading is *us*, referring to the body of participators in the common **faith. Acknowledging**—Rather, *knowing by experience*, or *experiencing.* **In us** depends upon *experiencing.* Render the whole: **That** thy sharing of the **faith may be** *efficient* in (or to) the experiencing in us of all that is **good, unto** (the glory of) **Christ Jesus.**

7. **Bowels**—A term thrice used in this epistle. Because the **bowels** are very sensitive to our deep emotions, and are a central part of the man, the term is used to signify our strongest affections and movements of feeling. **The saints**—Not only of Colosse, but of other parts, visiting and entertained at Philemon's hospitable home. **Brother** —Emphatic, from final position in the paragraph, as it is the last word in the Greek of the Epistle to the Galatians.

Request for the kind reception of Onesimus, 8–21.

8. **Wherefore**—The request is made in view of the high Christian character of Philemon, as described in the preceding paragraph. **Enjoin thee** — Paul

thee that which is convenient, **9** Yet for love's sake I rather beseech *thee*, being such a one as Paul the aged, [m] and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. **10** I beseech thee for my son [n] Onesimus, [o] whom I have begotten in my bonds: **11** Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: **12** Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: **13** Whom I would have retained with me, [p] that in thy stead

m. Verse 1.—*n* Col. 4. 9.—*o* 1 Cor. 4. 15; Gal. 4. 19.—*p* 1 Cor. 16. 17; Phil. 2. 30

holds his apostolic authority in reserve, lest he deprive Philemon of the honour of doing the noble thing freely, and from the fountain of his own Christian feeling. **Convenient** — An obsolete sense of the word for *the becoming, the befitting*, the suitable to thy Christian character. And, for the Christian, the highest *befitting* is the highest right, pure, generous, and magnanimous. Philemon must do the *befitting* to the high picture Paul has given of him.

9. **Being such**—Alford, and others of the best class of commentators, place a period before **being**, a comma after **such**, and a comma after **Christ**. The following as, then, does not correspond with **such**; and **such** refers to Paul as being entitled to **enjoin**, as above. **Being such**, (as might enjoin **thee**,) being **Paul the aged**, being also Christ's **prisoner**—for these three motives he does **beseech**. He is thus triply a supplicator for Onesimus, placing his own personality as pleader in front of his client. **The aged**—The veneration for his own age, for his long antecedents of toils, imprisonments, and martyrdoms, must plead for Onesimus. Paul was "a young man" at the martyrdom of St. Stephen, (Acts vii, 58,) but as he was then clothed by the Sanhedrin with plenary authorities, and was himself a member of the Sanhedrin, he was, probably, not less than thirty years of age. Supposing this to have been A. D. 37, and the letter to Philemon A. D. 63, Paul must now be near sixty. But bearing the weight of only sixty years, he bore the load of a life of labours and excitements, and the prestige of a great history, so as to have possessed the venerability of near seventy. But his age of sixty would imply that Philemon, from whom St. Paul claims the deference due to age, was a much younger man, so that Archippus could hardly have been, as some commentators suggest, his son.

10. **My son Onesimus**—The Greek order of words is, **for my son, whom I have begotten in my bonds—Onesimus.** The English order loses the reluctant delay of Paul to mention to Philemon the offensive name of the culpable runaway. The reader will trace the skill of Paul in his progressive approach to this point from the beginning of his epistle. Philemon, as he reads along, is led through a train of soothing preparatories, the object of which he does not suspect until he reaches this central word. All the circuitous prelude is in behalf of Paul's own bond-begotten **son**.

11. **Unprofitable**—A play upon the name Onesimus, which signifies **profitable**.

12. **Sent again**—Sent *back to thee*. If all slaves sent back had been sent with a like spirit and result, a "fugitive slave law" might have been almost a Christian institution. The phrase **thou therefore receive**, is a reading of doubtful authority. **Own bowels**—My own soul and vitals. There is no allusion to paternity in the words.

13. **In thy stead**—His *ministry* to Paul would not, therefore, be a servile one—a waiting on the apostle's bodily wants—but such a ministry as Philemon would have rendered, namely, aid in the **Gospel**. Slavery in ancient times often held cultured men in its bonds. Tyro, the bondsman of Cicero, was a literary aid to the orator. And there is quite a probability that Onesimus was a more competent apostolic assistant than Philemon. This accounts, in some degree, both for St. Paul's profound interest in his case, and for the traditions of his subsequent episcopate. The ser-

he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: **14** But without thy mind would I do nothing; [q] that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. **15** [r] For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever; **16** Not now as a servant, but above a servant, [s] a brother beloved,

[q] 2 Cor. 9. 7.—[r] Gen. 45. 5, 8.—[s] Matt. 23. 8;

vice was such a subordinate ministry as John Mark, and Timothy in his early days, rendered to Paul.

14. **Without thy mind...willingly**—The same reserve as above, both as apostle and spiritual father, leaving to Philemon the chance of a free-will obedience.

15. **Departed...season...for ever**—A beautiful apologetic for the fugitive. He sinned, but even his sins are divinely overruled and transformed into an instrument for the good of you both. **For ever**—A word suggestive of an immortal fellowship, and so intimating that it does not imply a perpetual servitude.

16. **Not now**—Literally, *no longer* as a *slave*, **but above a** *slave;* words obviously signifying, both negatively and positively, an end of the serfdom. To be *no longer* as a slave, is to cease to be a slave; and to be **above a** *slave*, is to be out of a servile rank. This view is slightly diminished by the as, but that word is used to soften the boldness of his asking the abdication, by Philemon, of a legal right. We cannot believe that Paul uses so much solicitude to secure a mere receiving and exempting from torture of a penitent slave by a deeply Christian man. A short time previously to this, Paul's attention was called to the atrocity of Roman slavery by a notorious public event. The prefect, or "mayor," of Rome was murdered by one of his slaves, and the whole body of his slaves, embracing a large multitude, including women and children, were publicly slaughtered, in obedience to Roman law.

It may not be the duty of a Christian living in the centre of a slave-holding country, to manumit his slaves; but it

specially to me, but how much more unto thee, [t] both in the flesh, and in the Lord? **17** If thou count me therefore [u] a partner, receive him as myself. **18** If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* aught, put that on mine account; **19** I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay *it:* albeit I do not say to thee how

[t] 1 Tim. 6. 2; 1 Jno. 5. 1.—[u] Col. 3. 22.—[u] 2 Cor. 8. 23.

is a public sin, in a Christian republic, to maintain a system of slavery, and it is a personal sin in every individual citizen not to use his voice, vote, and influence to do away the system.

Brother...to me—Although humanly there had been but a transient relation, yet divinely there was a divine tie between the apostle and his convert. **Specially**—As my bondage-begotten son. **In the flesh...Lord**—The *human* and *the divine* tie. The human tie is not perpetuated slavery, as commentators pervert the words **in the flesh.** Onesimus forgiven, emancipated, a bishop, would be *humanly* most dear to his former master and benefactor; divinely dear as a fellow-labourer in the Gospel. That commentators should cut off, by a series of exegetic violences, a view so obvious and so infinitely more worthy of Paul, of Philemon, and of the Gospel, looks like one-sidedness.

17. **As myself**—Not merely **receive him**, but **receive him as me.** Which, of course, does not mean clap the fetters on him again, whether of servile iron or of Roman law; but **receive him as a** brother, a Christian, and a Christian minister—**a partner.**

18. **If**—A word interposed to soften the positiveness of the charge. **If he hath wronged thee**—By theft or embezzlement, as he had, doubtless, confessed to Paul. **Or oweth thee aught**—If there is any pecuniary loss which he should make good in order to emancipation. **Put...mine account**—St. Paul will square it up.

19. **Mine own hand**—It is unreasonable to suppose, as some commentators do, that Paul took up his stilus

thou owest unto me even thine own self besides. **20** Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: [v]refresh my bowels in the Lord. **21** [w]Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for [x]I trust that [y]through your prayers I shall be given unto you. **23** There salute thee [z]Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus; **24** [a]Marcus, [b]Aristarchus, [c]Demas, [d]Lucas, my fellow labourers. **25** [e]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

v Verse 7.——*w* 2 Cor. 7. 16.——*x* Phil. 1. 25; 2. 24.——*y* 2 Cor. 1. 11.——*z* Col. 1. 7; 4. 12.——*a* Acts 12. 12, 25.

b Acts 19. 29; 27. 2; Col. 4. 10.——*c* Col. 4. 14. —— *d* 2 Tim. 4. 11. —— *e* 2 Tim. 4. 22; 2 Peter 3. 18.

and wrote solely this sentence. He may be supposed to have written so brief an epistle with his **own hand.** And this emphatic **mine own hand** constitutes a good promissory note, that if Philemon cannot bear the pecuniary loss resulting from pardon, amnesty, and emancipation, **I Paul will.** **Albeit**—A slight stay against Philemon's enforcing the promissory note. **Owest ...thine own self**—And so art bound to what my request and thy duty inspire thee to do.

20. **Yea, brother**—Earnestly and repetitively emphasizing the request. **Refresh**—Rather, *ἀνάπαυσόν, compose;* stop the anxious commotion of **my bowels,** my emotions.

21. **I wrote**—As if speaking to Philemon at the moment of his reading this letter. **More than I say**—Will interpret my softened requests to their fullest meaning, and do even **more than I say;** will render Onesimus every Christian aid to every Christian duty, looking to a hopeful future. Here (as Dr. Hackett in Lange quotes) Alford, De Wette, Bleek, and others, recognise an allusion to emancipation not before expressed. It is a much richer construing of the whole epistle, to say that this is an allusion to something more than the emancipation already repeatedly but delicately expressed.

Personal Conclusion, 22-25.

22. **Withal**—Literally, But at the same time. **Prepare...lodging**—A mandate, given with the authority of an apostle, and still more the **confidence** of a friend who knew that his coming was an object of earnest **prayers.** **A lodging**—Which explains Philemon's hospitality in verse 7.

23. **Epaphras**—Abbreviated form of Epaphroditus, as Luke of Lucanus. See our life of Luke, vol. ii, p. 11. Perhaps the same person as mentioned Phil. ii, 25; iv, 18. The fact of both being with Paul at Rome during his imprisonment indicates this; nor does it at all contradict this sameness, as Dr. Hackett seems to think, that he was part of the time, as it here appears, in prison there. It is also not here said that he belongs in Colosse, and so does not contradict the statement that he really belonged to Philippi. We are not to suppose two persons where one is amply sufficient to fulfil all the conditions of the two.

24. **Marcus**—The evangelist. See his life, prefixed to his gospel in our vol. i. **Aristarchus**—Note Acts xix, 29. **Demas**—Abbreviated form of Demetrius. See notes Col. iv, 14 and 2 Tim. iv, 10. **Lucas**—Luke the evangelist.

25. **Your**—In the plural, indicating that the benediction included all in the greeting of verses 1–3. **Spirit**—More solemn than *you* simply, as it is with the **spirit** of man that the Spirit of God communes.

The superscription, though not written by Paul, is ancient, and, unlike some of the superscriptions, correct.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

TO WHOM WRITTEN.

THE title of the book, "to the Hebrews," if not given by the author, must have been adopted by its copyists and readers upon its earliest circulation. It is the only title found in all the ancient manuscripts and copies in every part of the world. Its earliest receivers from the author, its earliest publishers and circulators, must, therefore, have certainly been "Hebrews." But what is meant by "Hebrews?" Primarily, it designates persons of Hebrew descent, whether born in Palestine or elsewhere. Thus Paul, though born in Cilicia, out of Palestine, asserts himself a "Hebrew of the Hebrews." Phil. iii, 5; 2 Cor. xi, 22. At one time, in Jerusalem, (Acts vi, i, where see notes,) it is used in antithesis to Hellenists, or Jews by descent but of foreign birth. This appears to have been but temporary, for the word appears later to be used specially in application to the entire Christian Church at Jerusalem. Thus Delitzsch says, "The Church of Jerusalem actually bore the title ἡ τῶν Ἑβραίων εκκλησία, (Clementis, *Ep. ad Jacob.*, hom. 11, 35,) as consisting entirely of Hebrews." So Eusebius, in his Church History, (iv, 5,) says that the Jerusalem Church consisted *of believing Hebrews*, εξ Ἑβραίων πιστῶν. So, as we might expect, the very title of the book, "to the Hebrews," not only points to Palestine, but designates the capital of Palestine, the sacred head of the Hebrew race.

This designation is confirmed by two considerations. First, the epistle, however widely it was to be afterwards circulated, was primarily addressed to a single Church; and, second, circumstances show that Church to have been Jerusalem. That it was primarily addressed to a single Church is clear from the last chapter, which is familiar in its tone, and adjusted to the peculiarities of a particular Church, especially the last three verses. The writer there informs the Church of Timothy's liberation, of his own hope soon to visit them with Timothy, and gives them the salutations of the Italian Christians present with him. See our notes on the passage. It is certain, then, that this epistle was sent to, and received by, a single local Church.

And this Church was Jerusalem. To what single Church would an epistle intended for the Hebrew Christians in general be addressed, but to the old representative capital? To what other Church would an epistle be entitled "to the Hebrews?" Such is the fair and clear presumption. We should assume this anticipatively, and maintain it until we are met by fair counter proof. The presumption is also against any side-way city, as Cæsarea or Alexandria; none of which ever made any claim in the early ages to the honour. If Cæsarea was really the Church addressed, (as Stuart is inclined to think,) how happens it that Eusebius of Cæsarea, the great Church historian, never heard of it? If written to Alexandria, strange that the illustrious line of Alexandrian scholars, including Origen, never dreamed of it. If to Rome, as Alford conjectures, it is unaccountable that early Rome ignores or rejects both its Paulinity and its canonicity. We are thus shut up to Jerusalem alone.

This view is confirmed by the minute knowledge of the temple ritual required by the epistle of its readers. Scholarly men might, indeed, be familiar with these details, but our author is not addressing the learned class, but the mass of the people. To the men perfectly acquainted with their minutiæ the appeal is first made, namely, to the Jerusalem Christians; and then the epistle could well go the rounds of all the Palestinian, and then of the Gentile, Churches. Particularly the phrase, "without the gate," (xiii, 12, where see our note,) presupposes that the mind of author and reader is at Jerusalem. Delitzsch acutely remarks, that in the epistle the constant antithesis is not between the *synagogue* and the *Church*, but between the temple and the επισυναγωγή — *episynagogue* — of the Christians. "No traces," he remarks, "are found of any such purely Jewish Churches as this addressed Church was, in the dispersion."

The assumption that this epistle was addressed to Jerusalem agrees remarkably with the relations of Paul to that Church. It was about six years before its writing that the apostle visited Jerusalem, attended by a retinue of friends, bearing donations from Greece and Asia to the "poor saints at Jerusalem." He was, with his friends, "received gladly," and was entertained at the house of Mnason, "an old disciple." And this fact answers the objection, that the "saints" of Jerusalem, being "poor," could not have exercised the hospitality ascribed to the receivers of this epistle, vi, 10. But Paul and his company had experienced these very hospitalities, and could afford to give credit for them. The plentiful hospitalities which, as "mother Church," the Jerusalem Christians had to exercise, may have contributed to make them "poor." The next day he was received in state by James with the elders, whom he "saluted" and favoured with a full report of his missionary success "among the Gentiles," for which "they

glorified the Lord." (Acts xxi, 17–20.) It is plain that the heart of the Church, including James, was fully with Paul. So it had been at the Jerusalem Council, years before. (Acts xv, 1–19.) But, as at the Jerusalem Council, so at this last visit, there was a body of Judaistic outsiders bitterly opposed to Paul. As it was the week of Pentecost, *myriads* of rural Judaistic Christians were in town, and it was fatally concluded that Paul should perform a ritual to conciliate them. In this performance he was assaulted by a mob of anti-Christian Jews, from them was rescued by the Romans, and sent into what proved an imprisonment finally at Rome. Peculiarly apposite is his application of the word **restored** (xiii, 19) to his return to a Church from which he had thus been violently snatched without even permission to bid them a hasty farewell. That with this Church he should afterward retain exchanges of communication, and that to it he should address a memorable epistle, second only to his Roman, has an interesting presumption in its favour. It precisely tallies, also, with the fact, that while the closing chapter amply reveals his person to the Church he addresses, his name should be withheld from its commencement, in order that its circulation among the Judaistic Churches of Palestine might not be impeded. This is the ancient solution; and we hold it as still standing good. It blends beautifully, too, with the testimony of the primitive Pantænus, yet to be given, that Paul declined to style himself **Apostle** in writing to the Jerusalem "Hebrews," reverently conceding that title, as the epistle truly does, to Him who was alone the divine **Apostle** to the chosen race. Heb. iii, 1.

AT WHAT TIME WRITTEN.

The use of the present tense in ix, 7, in describing the performance of the Jewish ritual, clearly indicates that the temple is still standing and Jerusalem undestroyed. But, as we interpret x, 25, 37, the Christians of Jerusalem were looking for the omens designated by our Lord (Matt. xxv) as betokening its coming doom. But the most precise date we think is fixed by xiii, 23, (where see our note,) which shows this epistle to have been written not long after Philippians, which was written about A. D. 63. To the Philippians Paul had given notice that when his judicial destiny was decided, he would send Timothy to them, and now he informs the Hebrews that Timothy is on that mission. This epistle, therefore, cannot be dated later than 64, six years before the destruction of Jerusalem. St. James had, according to Josephus, been martyred in 62, so that he may be counted among the martyrs commemorated in xiii, 7. See Introduction to the Epistle to James.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE EPISTLE.

Of the three great divisions of the Church—the EASTERN, including Asia Minor and Palestine, the ALEXANDRIAN, and the WESTERN or ROMAN—the first two received the epistle as Paul's, the last rejected it, both as canonical and Pauline. Yet those who received it as historically Paul's, did frequently, on account of its peculiarity of style, either conjecture it to have been translated into Greek from a Hebrew original written by Paul, or that in some way Paul's thoughts had been clothed with verbiage by another pen than his—as a guess, perhaps Luke's or Clement's. And here we reject the illegitimate process by which Lünemann and others bring out a very illegitimate anti-Pauline conclusion. They illogically confound a matter of historical *fact*, namely, the true authorship by Paul, with a matter of *opinion*, namely, a conjectural solution of the problem of the style. Eliminate the mere *opinion* from the historical fact, and we have left a very clear consensus of the Palestinian and Alexandrian Churches in the actual uncontradicted authorship by Paul. And this elimination should be made. For in a matter of style the modern critic may be as well able to judge as the ancient; but in a matter of fact the modern inquirer depends upon the ancient testimony. The one is guess, the other is history.

I. That the PALESTINIAN CHURCH, to whom the epistle was addressed, received it as Paul's, is a very decisive fact. If the epistle were written to Jerusalem Paul was certainly its author. The closing chapter of the epistle entirely demonstrates that the true author was known to the Church addressed, and that in all probability he subsequently visited the Church in company with Timothy. Five or six years afterwards Jerusalem was swept out of existence, and was unable to make its claim to be the Church of this epistle. And yet all the East claimed it as written to the East. The title "To the Hebrews" was stamped upon it. And when the Peshito Version, which was a translation of the Greek Testament into the Palestinian vernacular, was made, Hebrews was inserted by Palestinian authority in the canon, and in immediate connexion with the Pauline epistles.

Though no early Oriental writers are now extant to be quoted in behalf of Paul's authorship, yet we have the most conclusive evidence of the unanimity of the East. ST. JEROME, though a Latin writer, spent a large share of his life in Bethlehem-Judah, and the real view of the East is by him repeatedly stated. Thus, in his Epistle to Evagrius he uses this expression: "The Epistle to the Hebrews, which all the Greeks receive, and some of the Latins." In his Epistle to Dardanus he says: "This epistle, which is inscribed to the Hebrews, is received as the Apostle Paul's, *not only by the Churches of the East*,

but by all the past ecclesiastical writers of the Greek language, although the most [that is, of the Latins] think it the work of Barnabas or Clement: and this makes no difference, since it is the work of a man of the Church, and it is daily celebrated in the reading of the Churches. If the custom of the Romans do not receive it among the canonical Scriptures, just as the Greek Churches, with equal freedom, do not receive the Apocalypse of John, yet we receive both; not following the custom of the day, but *following the authority of the ancient writers*, who mostly use the testimonies of both, not as they are sometimes accustomed to do with the apocryphal writers, but as canonical."

From this testimony we know that—1. The Churches of Palestine, and the great body of Eastern Greek writers, received the book as Paul's; he was accepted by the Hebrews as author of their book of Hebrews: 2. In this the Latins dissented from them: 3. The book was read by the Palestinians in the public service: 4. For Jerome to accept the book as Pauline and canonical was to disregard the notion of the hour, and to rely on the "authority of the ancient authors." Now as Jerome was master of the Christian literature of Palestine and the East, as our modern times are not; and as he knew the public services and sentiments of the Palestinian Churches, this testimony covers the ground conclusively. Jerome would, indeed, be too late to be a primitive witness to the fact of Pauline authorship; but he is a decisive witness of the testimony of all the preceding writers and of the Hebrew Churches. With full knowledge of the whole case he not only abandoned the western opinion for the eastern, but he was, with Augustine, a main mover in converting the Western Church to correct opinions.

Eusebius, the father of Church history, resided in Cæsarea, Palestine, and was among the first to give a complete catalogue of New Testament books, with their authors. He divides the proposed books into three classes: the *undisputed*, the *disputed*, and the *spurious*. He reckons fourteen epistles, thereby including Hebrews as Paul's *undisputedly* with a reserve—1. That its Pauline authorship was questioned by some of the Latins; and, 2. That its style indicated it to be a translation from Paul's original Hebrew. His words are, (Book III, chap. iii,) "Fourteen *are clearly and certainly Paul's;* although it is proper to be known that some have rejected that which is written to the Hebrews, alleging, with the Church of Rome, that it is spoken against as not belonging to Paul." Herein we note two things: 1. Eusebius himself considers the epistle to be certainly Paul's, and that this is the true churchly opinion; 2. That the counter view is limited to "the Church of Rome," in deference to which a "some" dissent, not numerous enough to prevent the book's being classed with the *undisputed*. Yet, in deference to these, he does, in a later passage, call it *disputed*

According as he recognised these dissenters or not, the epistle was disputed or undisputed. But *the dissent was not native to Palestine.*

In default of extant remains of ancient eastern writers we have some important indications of this unanimity. The Council of Antioch, in about A. D. 264, issued a letter in regard to the heresy of Paul of Samosata, containing passages quoted from our book of Hebrews, and one, as Stuart says, is "directly ascribed to the same apostle who wrote the Epistle to the Corinthians."—EUSEBIUS, *Eccl. Hist.*, vii, 30. This was, of course, a testimony of a representative body of eastern bishops.

The argument is conclusive that 2 Peter iii, 15, 16 attributes this epistle to Paul. The words are: "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood." On these words we note: 1. They speak of a particular epistle "written unto you," in distinction from "all his epistles." There is an antithesis between "all" and "written unto you." One particular epistle is isolated from "all" the rest. 2. That one was "written unto YOU;" that is, to the converted "Hebrews." For it was to such that the First Epistle to Peter was written, (1 Pet. i, 1, where see note;) and "this second epistle" was written to the same, as appears by 2 Peter iii, 1. The one epistle "written unto you" was written to the Hebrews, and could be no other than this epistle. 3. The topic treated by that one was the retribution of the judgment day, a topic on which Hebrews is abundantly copious, ix, 27, 28; x, 19–31; xii, 1, 14, 15. 4. The phrase in this passage of 2 Peter, "things hard to be understood," (*δυσνόητά τινα,*) is too peculiar and too coincident with "hard to be uttered," (Heb. v, 11,) *δυσερμήνευτος λεγειν, hard to be interpreted to speak,* (see our note on the passage.) not to be a direct reference. So many coincident facts are very decisive that Paul is here declared by the author of 2 Peter to be the writer of Hebrews as a fact notorious to the Hebrew Christians.

II. Less primitive, but more learned, than the Church of Palestine, was the CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA, founded, according to good authorities, by St. Mark. Connected by a single intermediate generation with St. Mark was the founder of the celebrated Alexandrian theological school, PANTÆNUS, who was succeeded in the theological chair by Clement of Alexandria. Of Pantænus, Clement informs us that he held the epistle to be Paul's, which carries the testimony of Alexandria back, as we may say, through Mark, to the apostolic age. This as matter of *history*—the epistle was Paul's. As matter either of history or conjectural opinion, Pantænus held that Paul's reason for not giving his name was, that he was not apostle of the Hebrews, as truly the Lord himself alone was, as Paul in the epistle

truly states. Whether this was with Pantænus an historically-derived fact, or a critical conjecture, it is quite probably true; and it at any rate assumes that Paul was truly the author of the epistle.

CLEMENT himself attributes the epistle to Paul. To this historic fact he adds, as a solution of the un-Pauline style, that it was first written by Paul in Hebrew, and translated by Luke, and that Paul withheld his name in order not to repel the prejudiced Jews from reading. All this may be true history; or it may be a conjectural solution in addition to the historical fact, which is plainly affirmed, that Paul was author of the book of Hebrews.

ORIGEN was the most eminent biblical scholar of his age. He taught in Alexandria, his native city, through the earlier part of his life, but later in Cæsarea-Palestine. He was master of all the Alexandrian and Palestinian Christian literature. Critically, he thought the style un-Pauline, being too pure in its Greek, and free from some of Paul's peculiarities. Historically, his judgment is as follows: "Whatever Church holds this to be an epistle of Paul's, let it receive approval; for it is not without reason that the men of antiquity (*οἱ ἀρχαιοι ἀνδρες*) have handed it down as Paul's."

This is an historical statement of what the original receivers of the epistle, so far as Origen knew, affirmed of its authorship. And it is inadmissible (with Alford) to interpolate a limitation of these "men of antiquity" to Origen's two predecessors, Pantænus and Clement, for no such limitation is authorized by Origen; and, in fact, the words may have been written in Palestine. Nor can there be any limitation as to time; for if there were, to his knowledge, any earlier antiquity than that of these "men," which might have denied the epistle to Paul, he would have noted it. Historically, then, according to all known tradition, the epistle is Paul's.

Yet Origen pays his respects to the then "modern" criticism. "Nevertheless," says he, "who wrote the epistle God only *knows;* but a rumour has come to us, of some saying that Clement, Bishop of Rome, wrote it; and of others saying that it was written by Luke." Lay the emphasis on *knows*, and the whole is clear and true. Decisive as the historical testimony is, the style has produced conjectural opinions, and absolute truth on the subject is known to God alone. Yet Origen uniformly quotes the epistle as Paul's, not from a mere "habit," or from "the current," as Alford unjustifiably says, forgetting that such a "habit" must have had a reasonable basis, namely, the fact that although God alone absolutely *knows* the true author, yet there is a reliable human certainty justifying the uniform assumption of its Pauline authorship. Origen's universal habit of quoting Hebrews as Paul's own, shows that such was his position.

III. The WESTERN or ROMAN CHURCH, a Church defective in learning, on the contrary, gave this epistle a slow and cold reception, either ignoring it entirely, or ignoring its Paulinity, and even rejecting it from the New Testament Canon. CLEMENT, Bishop of Rome at the close of the first century, probably before St. John's death, and probably the personal friend of Paul, does, indeed, quote largely from it, apparently as Scripture, yet, as was the custom, without naming the author. He possibly recognised it as both canonical and Pauline. But Clement stands nearly alone in such recognition. IRENÆUS of Lyons, Gaul, probably wholly ignores it, perhaps was ignorant of it; and his pupil, HIPPOLYTUS, Bishop of Novi Portus, near Rome, stands in the same predicament. It is uncertain whether the epistle was received into the earliest Latin Version of the New Testament—certainly not as Paul's. The MURATORIAN CATALOGUE of New Testament books, belonging at Rome to the second half of the second century, does not clearly name it. There is, however, a remarkable passage in this catalogue, which in the Latin, as corrected by Westcott, (*Canon of the New Testament*,) reads thus: "Fertur etiam ad Laodicenses, alia ad Alexandrinos, Pauli nomine finctæ ad hæresim Marcionis." The last "ad" Westcott holds to be a translation of the Greek πρὸς, and so may be rendered *in regard to*. We may translate thus: "There is in circulation an epistle to the Laodiceans, another to the Alexandrians, forged under the name of Paul, in regard to the heresy of Marcion." We shall soon give reasons for supposing this epistle to the Alexandrians to be our Hebrews. In the Latin Church of Africa, TERTULLIAN quotes the epistle in support of a position of his; but he quotes it as written by Barnabas; and he imagines that he is exalting its credit by calling attention to the fact that Barnabas was no less than an apostle's colleague! Both the Paulinity and the canonicity of our epistle would fail if judged by early Rome alone. The reasons we take to be nearly these. The Church of Jerusalem, the mother Church of all, being demolished and dispersed, was unable to assert her claim to the honour of being its recipient, and no other Church had any claim to assert. The epistle travelled, as an orphan, slowly westward. And the farther the east from which it came (as from Jerusalem rather than Cæsarea) the more satisfactory this explanation of its slow reception. It came to Rome, not like Rome's own great epistle, as well as all the other Pauline epistles, headed with the illustrious name of Paul, but anonymous. Nor did its first chapter open like the Roman document, with an elastic Romanic majesty, (see our vol. iii, p. 289,) but with a certain Alexandrian rhythm and tune. In addition to this, it is held by such scholars as Wetstein and Hug, that such passages as Heb. vi, 4–8, and x, 26–31,

were quoted by the heretical Montanists at Rome to prove their doctrine that fallen members of the Church should never be re-admitted. The Roman Church bitterly opposed this Montanist view, and so rejected this anonymous epistle from the East that seemed to sustain it. It was in A. D. 494 that a Roman council, headed by Pope Gelasius, included in their catalogue of canonical books fourteen epistles of Paul, which, of course, embraced Hebrews. The Council of Trent confirmed this decision.

RIVAL CLAIMS TO ITS AUTHORSHIP.

Against the other names proposed as authors of this epistle the arguments appear conclusive.

BARNABAS is named by Tertullian alone. None of his great African successors, as Athanasius and Augustine, accept the opinion; but ascribe the epistle to Paul. His native island of Cyprus makes no claim for Barnabas; on the contrary, Epiphanius, the learned Bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus, sustains the claim of Paul. The opinion of Tertullian has had scarce a follower in any age.

The other rivals, as Clement, Luke, and Apollos are named, not on primitive historical evidence, but as solutions of the problem of style.

CLEMENT, being Bishop of Rome, if he were the author of the epistle, would have been loudly sustained by Rome. The epistle would not have been an orphan and a fugitive, but a native and a power, in the West. Besides, his style is less like that of the epistle than Paul's own style.

LUKE was a native, or at least a resident, of Antioch; and Antioch was amply able to give notoriety to his claim; but Antioch speaks for Paul alone. And of Luke, too, we affirm that his style is far more unlike the style of Hebrews than is Paul's own style. The resemblance to Luke's style are in minutiæ and turns of expression; which he may easily be supposed to have acquired from intimacy with Paul. What has Luke written that indicates that he could have written that grandiloquent first chapter of Hebrews? Where in Luke's style is the first tinge of Alexandrianism? What authority had Luke entitling him to write the magisterial rebuke of Heb. v, 12–14? What probability that a modest Gentile like Luke should assume to read so imperatorial a lecture on apostasy to the mother Church of Christianity?

APOLLOS is the last, but not the poorest, guess, having been first suggested by Luther fourteen centuries after date. So far as style of language is concerned, we might say that Luke's description of him, in Acts xviii, 24, renders him a fair candidate; but not as to style of mind. He appears as a rich, popular orator, easy to follow, mighty in Scripture. But there are traits in Hebrews of difficult transition, broken connexions of thought, and suspensions of the subject in order

to digression, which are by no means easy for the mind to follow, and which are inconsistent with the Apolline theory, and call for Paul alone.

IT BEARS THE SURE TOKEN OF A PAULINE EPISTLE.

Paul, however, never specified his name at the head to be the sure token of an epistle from him, but *the benediction at the end.* This token he gave in one of his earliest epistles (2 Thess. iii, 17, 18) as the sure test, in these words: "The salutation of [me] Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.* Amen." This benedictory salutation is given in all his thirteen epistles; and this token it is very significant, and, we think, very conclusive, to note, is carefully and explicitly given at the end of Hebrews. *It is authenticated as Paul's by Paul's own appointed* token. Thus, while the display of his name was not allowed to impede the general circulation of the epistle, the assurance of his authorship was carefully given to his friends at Jerusalem. Finally, if Delitzsch's suggestion, given in our note on chap. i, 1, is valid, then Paul's name, twice written, does stand occultly at the head of the epistle; a secret guarantee, perhaps, to his friends, but invisible to the eyes of his opponents; and so leaving its diffusion impeded throughout the Hebrew Christian world.

THE TWO SOLUTIONS OF THE PROBLEM OF STYLE.

The maintainers of Paul's authorship have suggested two conjectural solutions of the question of the supposed un-Pauline style of the epistle. The *first* is the hypothesis that Paul, by converse or by notes, gave the thoughts, and Luke, Clement, or Apollos wrote them out in his own style. The *second* is the assumption of an original Hebrew, of which the present epistle is a Greek translation by one of the above writers.

Of these two solutions the preferable would be the hypothesis of a Hebrew original, with a translation under Paul's supervision. Of that translation, as it stands, we can conceive no one capable but Apollos. He may have furnished the Alexandrian surface varnish; have yet preserved the Pauline peculiarities of connexion and transition underlying; have secured, in Alexandrian fashion, the uniform reference to the Septuagint; and, with Paul's association, have hit off the Greek word-plays, and even the verbal arguments upon the covenant-testament. There is some appearance in the words of Clement that there was historical authority for this hypothesis; but the fatal defect is, that there is no known trace of the existence of any such Hebrew original. The objection might be plausibly, but not satisfactorily, obviated, by supposing it lost in the destruction of Jerusalem and dispersion of the Church.

SUGGESTION OF A THIRD SOLUTION.

As this is a field still open, we venture a solution of our own. There were, to the later Jewish Church, to the New Testament, and to St. Paul, both a rabbinical and an Alexandrian side. Rabbinism, with its Targum and its talmudical traditions, belonged to Babylon and the East; Alexandrianism, with its Septuagint and its Philonean philosophies, belonged to the West; and both blended their influences upon Palestine and Jerusalem. Delitzsch, who has profoundly studied this subject, very strongly maintains that Alexandrianism performed a very important and divinely-appointed part in bridging over the public thought from the old covenant to the new. Philonism was a brilliant effort to bring the narrower, yet most divine Old Testament thought, into unison with the new expansive age. This it could not by any speculation successfully do; for it required Christ with his divine history to unite the new to the old. Thence it became important to take the right elements that both Rabbinism and Philonism furnished, and reconstruct them into Christian verity. Paul did this largely in regard to Rabbinism in Romans, Colossians, and Galatians. John did this in regard to the Logos, or Word; and in John a shade of the Alexandrian style is distinctly visible, even in the New Testament. In St. Paul such a reconstruction is somewhat performed in Galatians iv, 21–31, where see our notes. The same Alexandrianism appears in the speech of Stephen. But its greatest work, after John, is in this Epistle to the Hebrews, and we venture to believe that the work was performed solely by Paul himself.

In working this problem it must not be forgotten that Paul had a variety of surface styles, with a wonderful identity of underlying mental style. Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Timothy are remarkably different in surface colorings; yet we feel the one underlying mind of Paul dealing with us in all. There is a great difference in surface, and even in spirit, between the first chapter of Romans and the eighth chapter. The style of that eighth chapter approaches that of Hebrews more than it does that of the first chapter. Specially does Romans viii, 18-23 exhibit the same mystical blend of grandeur and slow moving pathos with Hebrews. Who can doubt that 1 Cor. x, 1–11 and Heb. ii, 7–19 came from the same pen?

Now at Jerusalem there was one or more Alexandrian synagogues, and the speech of St. Stephen shows that an Alexandrian spirit pervaded the air. Among the Alexandrian liberalists of Jerusalem, rather than among the rabbinical bigots, Christianity was likely to prevail. The rabbinical side emphasized the human Messiah, and tended to reject his divinity, and so ran into Ebionism. The Alexandrian preferred the ideal, almost impersonal, Logos-Messiah, and were stumbled

at our Lord's humiliation, weakness, suffering, and death. Philo had taught them this transcendentalism, attenuating the Messiah of prophecy almost into an idealism. It was, then, to save this Alexandrine class of Christians that Paul wrote this epistle. His whole epistle is one great effort to reconstruct Philonean Messianism into Christian Messianism. He begins by affirming all the transcendental grandeur of the Messiah's origin in the highest style of Philonism; he shows how thereby the very humiliations are as sublime as they are tender. How glorious is his picture of the divine **Apostle** Messiah; how touching, melting, winning his portraiture of the suffering, dying, priest-victim Messiah! And then all the ritual of Mosaicism is wrought into a vivid symbolism of that divine Sufferer's expiation. Thereupon with what tearful pathos, yet awful menace, does he warn his Hebrews from apostatizing from this living-dying Christ!

Now let us suppose that having learned the danger of Hebrew apostasy, and, probably, having learned that a large section of the Jerusalem Church had in fact already so apostatized, (note on vi, 4,) our apostle, after his release, stopping at Rome—or, as Mr. Lewin suggests, at Puteoli or at Ephesus, (where John's style shows that Alexandrinism was no stranger,)—had spent some weeks in an intense reading over of the works of Philo and his school, with purpose of this reconstruction. He is about to address a class of thinkers to whom that style is very attractive. Just as he once talked Hebrew to win the Hebrew Jerusalemites, (Acts xxii, 2,) he can now talk Philo to win these Alexandrian Jerusalemites. His own mind has a side of sympathy for this style, as well as for the measures of the Greek poets, or the wisdom of the rabbies. Partly unconsciously and partly consciously and willingly, he would, at least in parts of his essay—for this style reigns only in *parts*—adopt the style with which he was then imbued. He will give to his Alexandrians at Jerusalem a better Philo than Philo. And then we shall understand those strange words of the Muratorian fragment, quoted on a previous page, about the "epistle to the Alexandrians, forged in the name of Paul, in regard to the heresy of Marcion." The epistle was truly Paul's; it was truly addressed to the "Alexandrians," but to the Alexandrians at Jerusalem; it was, not intentionally but really, a powerful refutation of the "heresy of Marcion;" for Marcion rejected the God of the Old Testament, whereas the very first chapter of Hebrews sublimely identifies the Son with the Father, the Jehovah of the old covenant.

Philo Judæus, born in Egypt a few years before the birth of our Saviour, was a resident of Alexandria, and of priestly rank. He was once ambassador from the Jews to the Roman Emperor Claudius, and was by marriage allied to the royal house of Judea. In religious

philosophy he endeavoured to find all true philosophy, which in his view was mainly identical with Platonism, in the Old Testament. His works, in four volumes, translated by Yonge, form a part of Bohn's Ecclesiastical Library.

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EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

GOD, who at sundry times and [a]in divers manners spake in time past unto the athers by the prophets, 2 Hath [b]in these last days [c]spoken unto us by *his* Son, [d]whom he hath appointed heir of

a Num. 12. 6, 8.——*b* Deut. 4. 30; Gal. 4. 4; Eph. 1. 10.——*c* John 1. 17; 15. 15; chap. 2. 3.

d Psalm 2. 8; Matt. 21. 38; 28. 18; John 3. 35; Romans 8. 17.

PART FIRST.

THE ARGUMENT.

CHAPTER I.

I. TRANSCENDENCE OF THE SON AS GLORIOUS APOSTLE AND AS SUFFERING HIGH PRIEST OF THE NEW AGE, INTRODUCTIVELY PRESENTED, i, 1–ii, 19.

1. Transcendence of the Son as divine Apostle of our Age, 1–4.

WITH a most impressive grandeur does our author open upon his readers the full affirmation of the divine origination of the Son, preparatory to unfolding the true glory of his humiliation. If his Alexandrian audience glory in asserting the Son's divinity, he can reassert that same on the highest key.

1. **God**—The divine name is not thus placed at the beginning of this epistle in the Greek. The first words are the two Greek adverbs, rendered **sundry times** and **divers manners,** *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως.* Each of these Greek words begins with a *pol;* and Delitzsch asks whether this is accidental, or whether the epistle does thus begin intentionally, with a hint of Paul's own name. **Sundry times and in divers manners**—More literally: *In many parts and by many methods.* The words describe the fragmentary character of the old revelations, in depreciatory comparison with the unity of revelation by the **Son.** There is no Greek word answering to **times.** *In many parts,* indicates that truth came by piecemeal through a succession of ages. **Divers manners**—Sometimes by visions and dreams, sometimes by word of mouth, by the declaration of angels, by the impulsive inspiration of prophets, by types and symbols. These were all, however, as but lamps and candles before the coming of the sun. **In time past**—Πάλαι, *in the olden time, anciently;* including the whole period of inferior revelation before the coming of the **Son. The fathers**—The Hebrew ancestry, who heard the ancient revelations. **By the prophets**—Including the inspired mediums of either or all these methods of revelation, at whose head was Moses.

2. **These last days**—The English gives accurately the general sense of the peculiar phrase, *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων,* the *ultimatum* or *finality of these days.* We take it that *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου, at the finality,* is the true antithesis to **time past,** or *of old;* and that of **these...days** defines the *finality* as *consisting* of **these** Messianic, in contrast to the old prophetic, **days.** So Delitzsch defines the phrase as signifying "for our author here, as for Peter, (1 Pet. i, 20,) that 'last time' which he viewed as already begun, and as in process of *unfolding itself before his eyes.*" **His Son**—Greek, *a* **son.** The old seers were but **prophets;** this last is no less than a **son.** But inferentially, as **the prophets** were *his* **prophets,** so the **son** is no less than **his Son.** And how lofty a being, how infinitely superior to **the prophets** of old is this **Son,** Paul proceeds to unfold. Render the whole sentence thus: *In many parts and by many methods God, having spoken to the fathers in the olden time by the prophets, has in the final-*

all things, [e] by whom also he made the worlds; 3 [f] Who, being the

[e] John 1. 3; 1 Cor. 8. 6; Col. 1. 16.

[f] John 1. 14; 14. 9; 2 Cor. 4. 4; Col. 1. 15.

ity, consisting of these days, spoken unto us by a Son. There is in the sentence an elegant antithesis, consisting of a series of neatly adjusted contrastive terms. Compare remarks on Paul's rhythmical passages in our vol. iii, p. 287, and our note on Rom. i, 1. Perhaps there is not another as finely rounded a period in this epistle as this introductory one.

In the sublime three descriptive clauses that follow, the writer goes deeper and deeper at each step, if we may so express it, back into eternity. He traces his predicates regressively. First, the Son's heirship of all things; preceded by his creation of all things; and that preceded by his inmost emanative identity with the divine Essence. The predicate phrase, **whom he hath appointed heir of all things,** is based upon, **by whom also he made the worlds;** and that upon the **being** and **upholding** of verse 3, all furnishing a description of the infinite superiority of the eternal **Son.**

And, undoubtedly, we must here avail ourselves of the important distinction between "the order of nature" and "the order of time." One eternal may, in the order of nature, precede another eternal. An eternal cause eternally precedes an eternal effect, as an eternal Father precedes an eternal Son. God's eternal nature and person precede in order his foreknowledge, as his foreknowledge precedes his predeterminations. So the *heirship* of Christ, if eternal, is preceded by *his creation of the worlds*, which means not merely the production of planets and earths, but the eternal self-revelation of God in production of creature existence. And this creation is preceded by God's self-expression in the eternal Word: or, as it is otherwise mentally conceived, the generation by the Father of the **Son.**

We are now prepared to answer the questions here aroused before the commentators, When did the **Son** become **heir of all things?** And what are the **all things** of which he became **heir?** To the first question the answer has been made by many annotators that his heirship took place at the resurrection and ascension. And undoubtedly it did take place, for the divine-human **Son,** at that time; but that was only an objectivizing of the eternal heirship of the Logos of John and the **Son** of our present writer. More erroneous is the answer of some commentators, that it was an heirship in God's eternal purpose, as if the Logos by whom (John i, 3) every thing became existent which has become, were not eternal **Son,** and, if **Son,** then *heir.* The back-ground of the divine Essence becomes manifest through the Word resulting in creation; which is existence different from the divine Being. **Heir**—Not simply lord, possessor, (which would be true of the Father,) but derived possessor, as **Son** of a Father, though a Father that never dies. **All things**—Not only earth, planets, suns, fixed stars, and *nebulæ*, but all the real universe of which these are but external glimpses perceptible to our little optics. Were we endowed with an additional number of senses, vast additional volumes of God's created universe would open before our perceptions and our knowledge. **Worlds**—All the mundane systems of which the universe ever consisted. As between the two terms, *cosmos*, frame-world, and *æon*, time-world, the latter is here used. So that the term **worlds,** here, first suggests systems successive in time, and then by secondary implication, takes in their space-filling or frame-work character, if such they have. So, also, is the same word used at chap. xi, 3. That this is the meaning is absolutely proved by ver. 10–12. If the reader compare these views of this passage with John i, 1–14; Col. i, 15, and onwards; Phil. ii, 6; 1 Cor. viii, 6; x, 4; xv, 47; 2 Cor. iv, 4; viii, 9, he will reasonably infer that the author of Hebrews agrees with John and Paul in his views of the exalted nature of the Son, or Logos, in his pre-existent being. Having thus

brightness of *his* glory and the express image of his person, and [f] upholding all things by the word of

[g] John 1. 4; Col. 1. 17; Rev. 4. 11.—[h] Chap. 7. 27; 9. 12, 14 26.

traced the heirship and creatorship of the **Son,** he now penetrates even more deeply into his essential relations to the divine Essence.

3. **Brightness...glory**—The relation of the **Father** to the **Son** is indicated as that of an essential **glory** to a **brightness,** or forth-beaming radiation. Hence the Nicene Creed styles the Son, "Light of light," (*φως εκ φωτος*, literally, *light out from light,*) and pronounces the Father and Son to be of one substance, "consubstantial," as light and light are one. Stuart asks if the sun and the rays proceeding from him are "consubstantial?" The reply is, that the body of the sun is material, whereas the **glory,** the pure "light," is the very essence of God, and its radiations being also luminosity, are consubstantial with it. In place of the dark, material, central body of the sun, issuing its rays, is the central divine Essence, which, in the Miltonic phrase, is "dark with excessive bright," yet unfolding its visible effulgence in the Son. **Brightness**—The Greek thus rendered is *ἀπαύγασμα*, which may signify either, 1. A ray actually darting forth from the **glory** or luminosity; 2. A bright spot shed upon a surface upon which it alights; or, 3. A light-form; being the shape assumed by the collected beams in combination: a second emanative luminosity repeating the first luminosity. That this last is the meaning here is clear from such phrases as, (Col. i, 4,) "image of the invisible God;" (Phil. ii, 5,) "form of God," on which passages see notes. This emanative nature of the *ἀπαύγασμα* is ground for the use of the terms Son, Word, and, in the present epistle, **Apostle.** Chap. iii, 1, where see note. **Express image**—The **image,** here, is literally the figure or letters made upon a surface by a stamp. Hence, the relation between the Father and Son is here indicated by that between the stamp and the impress it fixes. This illustra-

his power, [h] when he had by himself purged our sins, [i] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on

[i] Psalm 110. 1; Ephesians 1. 20; chapter 8. 1 10. 12; 12. 2; 1 Peter 3. 22.

tion, of course, touches only the two points of derivation and oneness. **Person**—More properly, *substance;* same word as in xi, 1, where see note. The eternal Son is the **express image** of the Father's basis-reality, his essential being. The one is God permanent, and the other is God emanant. **Upholding**—As the ineffable Essence is the background, so the Word is its revelation in executive action. This Word is the eternal medium between the Essence and all external creations, both in bringing and maintaining them in existence. **Word of his power**—A more energetic phrase than "his powerful word," as it is sometimes rendered. The emphasis is on **his power,** and its **word** is its expression in act. The Socinian explanation, referring it to the "Gospel," is entirely out of place. As executive of the divine essential God, the Word is "the plastic Power" by which all the natural and typical forms of things in nature are shaped and endowed with properties and powers; and, assuming humanity, the Word becomes the shaping agent of all the primary realities of the moral realm. In the former he is incarnated as immanent deity in the material world; in the latter he is incarnated as immanent deity in the material body of a human person. Mr. Bushnell somewhere says, in effect, it is no more impossible for God to be incarnated in Christ than for him to be inworlded in the cosmos. As Word, the divine **Apostle** is Lord of nature; as Son, he is King of nations and Head of the Church. **Purged...sat**—Transition now from the Son's pre-existent state and being, to his incarnate manifestation and doings. Thus far the **Son** has been an emanation, an eternal **apostle;** now he becomes not only incarnate **apostle,** but HIGH PRIEST, iii, 1. **Purged,** more literally, *having wrought a purification;* that is, a purifying by his atonement as our priest. That

high; 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as [k] he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

[k] Ephesians 1. 21; Phil. 2. 9, 10.—[l] Psalm 2. 7; Acts 13. 33; chap. 5. 5.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, [l] Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, [m] I will be to

[m] 2 Samuel 7. 14; 1 Chronicles 22. 10; 28. 6; Psalm 89. 26, 27.

purification is wrought by him potentially, once for all; it is actually appropriated in the individual by act of faith. **By himself**—And not, as symbolically under the old dispensation, by victims and sacrifices. **Right hand**—Note on Rom. viii, 34 and Acts vii, 55. The image, derived, doubtless, from Psalm cx, alludes to the Oriental custom by which a prince or premier, or other most exalted subject, sits at the right side of the throne. The phrase is never applied to the pre-existent **Son**, but always implies his incarnation and his exaltation in his glorified humanity. **On high**—Greek, Ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, in high regions, the third heavens. On the heavens, see our note on 2 Cor. xii, 2. On relative locality of Father and Son, note, Acts vii, 55, 56.

4. **Being made**—Rather, *having become;* a state which had a commencement, as the **being** of verse 3 is a state without commencement. This **being made**, takes place in the incarnate exaltation, as the **made a little lower than the angels**, of ii, 9, takes place in the incarnate humiliation. **By inheritance**—From an undying Father. **Name**—Rather, dignity embraced in the **name** of **Son.** It was by power of his eternal inheritance (v. 2) as **Son** that he passed through the humiliation of the incarnation, and attained an incarnate exaltation above angelic rank.

2. Proof of this transcendence from Old Testament texts, 5-14.

5. **For**—To prove this superiority of the eternal **Son** over the **angels**, our author now quotes six texts from the Old Testament. The modern interpreter, especially of the rationalistic type, finds not a little difficulty in applying these passages to Christ. But if, as in our Introduction we have indicated, the very purpose of our inspired apostle is to take the Alexandrian interpreters at their own word, and confirm all their brightest ascriptions and descriptions of the eternal Word, and affirm them of Christ, and thence show with what a glory even his humiliations are thereby irradiated, little difficulty need be felt in the interpretations here given. Says Delitzsch, "This epistle forms a link between the later Pauline epistles and the writings of John, and excels all others in the New Testament in the abundance of what cannot be merely accidental resemblances to Alexandrine modes of thought and expression. To us, indeed, it seems indisputable that the Jewish theology of the last few centuries before Christ, in Palestine, and more especially in Alexandria, did manifest many foregleams of that fuller light which was thrown on divine things in general, and on the triune nature of the Godhead in particular, by the great evangelical facts of redemption; nor can the admission that so it was prove a stumbling block to any but those who think that the long chain of divine preparations for the coming of Christ, on which the whole outward and inward history of Israel is strung, must have been broken off abruptly with the last book of the Old Testament canon. Is it, then, possible that the Book of Wisdom (vii, 26) should speak of the Sophia as *ἀπαύγασμα φωτος ἀϊδίου*—a beaming forth of the eternal light (Philo, De Cherub) of God—as *ἀρχέτυπος αὐγή*, archetypal splendour; and now our author of Him who was manifested in Jesus as *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δοξης αὐτου*, without these several terms having any internal historical connexion?" **At any time**—Though **angels** are incidentally called **sons**, this is not their permanent name as significant of their nature. No one angel is ever mentioned or addressed as **Son.** **Thou**—Quoted from Psa. ii, where see notes. The psalm was ap-

him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? **6** [1]And again, when he bringeth in [n]the first-begotten into the world, he saith, [o]And let

[1] Or, *When he bringeth again.*—[n] Romans 8. 29; Col. I. 18.

[o] Deuteronomy 32. 43, Septuagint; Psalm 97. 7; 1 Peter 3. 22.

plied by the Jewish commentators to the Messiah as well as by the Jerusalem Church. Acts iv, 25. **This day**—As addressed by the Author to a human Son, anointed to be king in Zion, the phrase is of course temporal. It means "This day [it stands true that] I have [from eternity] begotten thee." Even here, therefore, it does not mean that the exaltation and anointing are identical in time with the begetting. And this seems to refute those who in its higher application to Christ refer the begetting to his resurrection or to his incarnation.

6. **And**—As the last verse touches the coronation of the eternal **Son,** so this verse describes his induction into the rule of **the world. Again**—Understood by our translators and by many commentators as correlated to the **again** of the last verse, as introducing a superadded quotation. Others make it qualify **bringeth in;** as if reading, **when he again bringeth in;** as referring to some *second* being, brought in after a first. Alford and Delitzsch refer it to the second advent; very arbitrarily, for it needs some previous mention of the first advent to make it allowable. If a second bringing into the inhabited world is to be supposed, then we should refer it to his resurrection, which was the time of a return and of exaltation, closing the period of his humiliation. See note on Matt. xxviii, 18. Then all power in heaven and in earth was given unto him. So Eph. i, 19, 20: "He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named," etc. Then, of course, was fulfilled the requirement on all supernal powers to do him homage. But to describe the second advent as a *bringing of the Son into the world* is entirely unbiblical. **First-begotten**—Because eternally **begotten.** For even if God has been eternally engaged in creating, still the **Son** is in order of nature **first.** And when the **Son** is called **first-begotten,** it is implied both that his being begotten is prior in order and superior in nature: for creation and formation are in a lower sense figured as generation. And it is as **first-begotten** that he is, by the divine primogeniture, **heir.** Verse 1. So he is **firstborn of every creature,** Col. i, 15; **firstborn** among earthly rulers, Psa. lxxxix, 27; **firstborn** from the dead, Col. i, 18; Rev. i, 5. Here the term stands alone, and it alludes to the **this day,** that is, primordially, **have I begotten thee,** (of the last verse,) as God manifest, prior to and above all created things. **World**—Not *cosmos,* or frame-world, nor *æon,* or time-world; but *oikoumenê,* the inhabited earth. **He** [God] **saith**—Quoted, perhaps, from Psa. xcvii, 7, which reads in the Septuagint, "Worship him, all his angels." Yet the precise words are found in the Septuagint in Deut. xxxii, 43, which the Jewish doctors held also Messianic. Indeed, Delitzsch maintains that in the Old Testament, Jehovah, when described as *coming, manifestive, administering the affairs of the world,* implies Jehovah, the Word, the Son, the ultimate Messiah. The words in Deuteronomy are in the Seventy, but not in the Hebrew. They may, indeed, be supposed to have been in the Hebrew copy used by the Septuagint translators, but dropped out from other copies. They may have been transferred from the psalm, being, perhaps, an essentially accurate reading in some copy of the Septuagint, and even in the copy used by our author. More probably the addition to the Septuagint of Deut. xxxii, 42 is made up from Isa. xliv, 33, Psalm cxvii, 7, and Psalm xxix, 1, springing probably from the liturgical use in the Jewish synagogue of the song of Moses, that is, its use in the chanting of the song in the public worship. Our author, therefore, even if quoting a superaddition to the song,

all the angels of God worship him. **7** And [2]of the angels he saith, [p]Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. **8** But unto the Son *he saith*, [q]Thy

2 Greek, *unto*.—*p* Psa. 104. 4.—*q* Psa. 45. 6. 7.

quotes a superaddition acknowledged by his readers, and really made up of inspired words. All the psalms from xciii to cl were by the Jews held predictive of the Messiah. Psalm xcvii is an expansion of our author's words in verse 2, **appointed heir of all things.** This quotation is an expansion, also, of Psa. ii, 7–12, which all confess, who confess any Messiah, to be Messianic. It describes **the firstborn,** the eternal **Son,** as God manifest, ruling over nature and overruling all things to the highest ultimate moral good. And when, by the Father, he is thus installed over all, the very highest intelligences are required to do him homage.

In our English version, as in the Hebrew, Psa. xcvii, 7 reads, "Worship him, all ye gods;" and the connexion indicates the idea that the heathen deities are to submit to Jehovah. In accordance with the idea that behind the idol there is a demon, the Jewish Church preferred to extend the term to include all supernaturals. Stuart shows that *elohim* (gods) is a term repeatedly rendered in the Septuagint by angel, as Job xx, 15; Psa. viii, 6; cxxxvii, 1. The writer of Hebrews does the same in ii, 7, in quoting Psa. viii, 6, as he does in this present verse.

7. **And**—We have here (7–9) another contrast between **angels** and **the Son.** The former are but natural instruments, the latter is **God,** ruling in **righteousness, forever. Spirits**—Rather, *winds;* and thus we have the parallelism, **maketh his angels** *winds,* **and his** *servants* **a flame of fire.** Angels are so made that they may transform themselves into, and serve the work of, *winds,* and of lightning flashes or atmospheric blazes. Our author's exact words are found in the Alexandrian Septuagint. The Hebrew at first seems to have a slightly different sense. Psa. civ, 4. In that psalm, verse 3 says, "who maketh the clouds his chariot,"

throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of [3]righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. **9** Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy

3 Greek, *rightness*, or, *straightness*.

and hence some infer that this cited verse should read, he **maketh the** *winds* **his** *messengers,* which would exclude any reference to literal **angels.** But, in fact, in the verse cited, the Hebrew reverses the order of the words of verse 3, and reads, **maketh his angels** *winds,* which is the true rendering. Alford gives quotations from Schöttgen and Wetstein showing that our author gives the meaning as held by the Jewish Church. Schemoth Rabba, § 25, fol. 123, 3, says, "God is called God of hosts, because he does with his angels whatsoever he wills. Whensoever he wills he makes them sitting; (Judges vi, 11;) sometimes he makes them standing; (Isa. vi, 2;) sometimes he makes them similar to women; (Zech. v, 9;) sometimes to men; (Gen. xviii, 2;) sometimes he makes them *winds,* (Psa. civ, 4,) the citation of the present verse. Sometimes fire, *ibidem.*"

8. **Saith**—Quoted from Psa. xlv, 6, 7, generally held to be a Messianic psalm. See in vol. v, O. T., of this series. It is addressed not so much to the pre-existent Word as to the incarnate **Son,** tracing the character of his rule in the earth, with his Messianic exaltation in consequence. **Thy throne, O God**—That the vocative here agrees with both Greek and Hebrew, see notes. **Sceptre of righteousness**—The rule of the Mediator is in itself right; it is the origin and securer of the moral quality in the progress of the world; and it is pledge that the right shall prevail in the final destinies of men. Physical nature in itself is necessitated, and destitute of justice and mercy. The normal processes of necessary causes, by the law of the Father as God of nature, are all relentless and regardless of the gracious. It is from the presence and sway of the blessed Mediator, under grace of the Father, that the power of mercy and peace is felt in earthly things.

9. **God, even thy God**—Some ex-

God, *r* hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. **10** And, *s* Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

r Isaiah 61. 1; Acts 4. 27; 10. 38.

s Psalm 102. 25.

cellent commentators make this also vocative, and read, *therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee.* See Dr. H. So Augustine, as quoted by Alford: "O thou God, thy God hath anointed thee. God is anointed by God." **Anointed . . . oil of gladness**—Reference is here had to anointing, not to the office of king, but to a triumphal anointing in consequence of merit and victory. The head was customarily anointed at festivals. Deut. xxviii, 40; Psalm xxiii, 5; xcii, 10; Matt. vi, 17. **Above thy fellows**—As the anointing is not to office, so the **fellows** are not, as some understand, other kings, but the **angels.** They are not, indeed, ever said to be **anointed,** but it is in this very fact of the unction being bestowed on him that he is distinguished as **above** them.

10. **And**—Quoted from Psalm cii, 26–28, where see notes. Though this psalm is within the Messianic number, there is nothing in its contents which limits it to him. We are at liberty, indeed, whether applied to the Trinity or to the **Son,** to see that our author intends it to be an expansion of his own words in verse 2, **by whom also he made the worlds.** It is to the Logos, the executive Maker of **the worlds,** that in accordance with the mind of the Church he applies them. **In the beginning**—Literal Greek, κατ' ἀρχάς, *at beginnings.* At the various commencements, whether of different things in the same *world,* or of serial **worlds** in succession. Less solemn and aboriginal than St. John's ἐν ἀρχῇ, "*In the beginning* was the Word." For even if a scientist maintains that matter is chronologically eternal, still in the order of nature and truth God, the Word, is back of it. It is dependent and phenomenal; He is independent, unconditioned, and absolute. If creation, or creations, be eternal in series, it is because He eternally and freely creates. **Laid the foundation**—It is not illegitimate for modern science to read into these words the definite facts comprehensively embraced in them. By the divine Word, the author of order in chaos, the work of order, whatever it was, was performed. If that chaos was a nebula, there was nothing in the mere nebula itself by which it could frame itself into an intellective system. If it condensed and hardened, without some regulative mind it would harden into an unintelligent solidity. It required an indwelling Mind, a divine Logos, to translate the unintelligent mass into intelligent forms. As easily could a pile of type lying in pi form themselves into a poem without a forming mind, as a pile of matter frame itself into a *cosmos* without the formative Logos. No atheistic philosophy, whether of Hume or Herbert Spencer, has been able to bridge this chasm. **Foundation**—Geology reveals such "foundation" in the primitive rocks, and in the strata of successive ages. **Heavens**—The atmospheric expanse; and we may add, as speaking optically from our earth-centre, the firmament and the starry **heavens. Works of thine hands**—Spoken anthropomorphically, that is, under momentary conception, as if God were an infinite man; which abstracting away from him all imperfection, and adding all perfection, we rightfully do. Weak-minded pseudo-philosophers raise a great protest against such anthropomorphism, showing a sudden sensitiveness at our degrading God—a God in whom they themselves do not believe. And yet Mr. Spencer, who leads in this outcry against anthropomorphizing "the Absolute," thinks he elevates him by denying to him the attribute of intelligence. A better philosopher, Sir Isaac Newton, says, (at the close of his "Optics,") that the entire universe, including all material things from the planets down to animal bodies, the organs of sense and motion, and the instinct of

11 [t]They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; **12** And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. **13** But to which of the angels said he at any time, [u]Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? **14** [v]Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for

[t] Isa. 34. 4; 51. 6; Matt. 24. 35; 2 Pet. 3. 7, 10; Rev. 21. 1.——[u] Psa. 110. 1; Matt. 22. 44; Mark 12. 36; Luke 20. 42; chap. 10. 12; verse 3.——[v] Psa. 34. 7; Dan. 3. 28; Luke 1. 19; 2. 9, 13; Acts 12. 7

brutes and insects, "can be the effect of nothing else than the wisdom and skill of a powerful everliving Agent, who, being in all places, is more able by his will to move the bodies within his boundless, uniform sensorium, (of space,) and thereby to form and reform the parts of the universe, than we are by our will to move the parts of our own bodies." In his "Principia" he says: "It is confessed that God supreme exists necessarily. By the same necessity he is *always* and *everywhere*. Whence he is all similar to himself—all eye, all ear, all brain; all perceptive, intellective, and active force; but in a manner not at all human or corporeal, but in a mode to us unknown."—*Liber* iii, *De Mundi Systemate*.

That acute Christian philosopher, Tayler Lewis, rebuking the squeamish avoidance of anthropomorphisms by later Jewish writers, as Philo and the Rabbis, shows that the divine mind is truly competent to see things as man sees them, and to realize the human feeling. If God knows how things appear to our human thought he must be able to see them not only as he absolutely sees them, but as we finitely see them; that is, he thinks our thoughts. "May not God come actually into the human sphere and the human finity? May he not, if it pleases him, tabernacle in the human mind, knowing things as we know them, feeling them as we feel them? For, unless he thus knows them as we know them, feels them as we feel them, there would be a knowledge unknown to him as it really is—that is, as it exists in our mind." And yet, Moses, who uses the strongest anthropomorphisms, (and we may add, Newton, as in the above quotation,) "knew that God was infinite as well as Spinoza" knew it.

11. **They shall perish**—They shall change from one form or system to another, the old form disappearing. Compare Isa. xxxiv, 4; v, 6; vi, 11; 2 Pet. iii, 12, 13; Rev. xx, 11. Science assumes matter to be indestructible; higher truth holds it to be in itself phenomenal, and indestructible only as it is sustained by underlying divine power. **Thou remainest**—The Greek word expressively means, *thou art permanent through*; that is, *through* all the changes of phenomena and systems.

12. **As a vesture**—By a figure of great majesty in this verse God is an infinite Person, and the universe is his immense raiment. As a person takes off, folds up, and throws aside when old, his garments, so God deals with phenomenal things. **But,** contrastively, the person remains **the same,** and of God's person the **years shall not fail;** they shall roll forever onward.

13. **Sit on my right hand**—Words applicable to Christ's exaltation at his ascension. See notes on verse 3; Matt. xxviii, 18. **Until**—During the interval between that ascension and the completion of the work of his second coming. **Make . . . footstool**—Note on Acts ii, 35. This is to be being accomplished during the present dispensation, and fully accomplished at the final judgment.

14. **They**—The **angels** in contrast with the **Son.** He is enthroned at God's right hand; they are perpetual servants. **All**—Even to the highest rank. Even Gabriel ministered to Daniel. **Ministering**—*Liturgical;* that is, performing a public and sacred service. For the *liturgia* (whence our liturgy) was originally in Athens a public service rendered by wealthy citizens

them who shall be [w] heirs of salvation?

CHAPTER II.

THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* [1] slip. 2 For if the word [a] spoken by angels was steadfast, and [b] every transgression and disobedience re-

[w] Romans 8. 17; Titus 3. 7.—[1] Greek, *run out as leaking vessels.*

[a] Deut. 33. 2; Psa. 68. 17; Acts 7. 53; Gal. 3. 19. —[b] Num. 15. 30, 31; Deut. 4. 3; 17. 2, 5, 12; 27. 26.

to the public at their own expense; thence the term designated the sacred ministrations of the Jewish priesthood in the temple. The **angels** are *liturgical* **spirits** performing God's public ministrations. The angels are not menials or secular servants; they are sacred servitors. They do not carry on the processes of mere physical nature. **Spirits**—In contrast with human, corporeal, ministers. **Sent forth**—Passive participle in the continuous present, *being ever* **sent forth.** Whence **sent forth,** may appear from our closing note on verse 3. **For**—Not *to.* Their service is rendered *to* God in behalf of **men.** And not *for* all men, but specially for **heirs;** or, rather, those who are about **to be heirs; heirs** not only in expectation but in possession; that is, who will in due time come into a realized inheritance of **salvation.** Notes on Matt. xviii, 10, and Eph. ii, 2.

CHAPTER II.

3. The guilt of disobeying the word of the Son proportioned to the dignity of his nature, 1–4.

1. **Therefore**—In view of the great fact unfolded in the last entire chapter, that the **Son,** who now *speaks,* is lord of **angels,** creator of **worlds,** the eternal through all ages of the changing temporals. The importance of the **things . . . heard** is proportionate to the eternal Speaker. **Let them slip**—Rather, **lest we** *slip past them,* in carelessness and inattention. The Greek verb really signifies to *flow* or *glide by,* as a stream of water. It is really a neuter verb, and yet is here used in the subjunctive passive, so as to read literally, **lest we** *be flowed* (or glided) *past them.* Similar is the Septuagint phrase in Prov. iii, 2, rendered freely, "My son, let them not depart from thine eyes."

2. **Word spoken by angels**—By **word,** here, must undoubtedly be centrally meant the Law as given at Sinai, yet so as to include the various angelic messages delivered by angels and recorded in the Old Testament, which were truly subordinate additions. That the Law is centrally meant, is clear from the fact that the entire comparison is between the giving the old Law and the giving the new Gospel, showing the superiority of the latter. **Spoken by angels**—But we are told very explicitly (Exod. xx, 1, 19, 22, and Deut. v, 4) that it was God himself who spoke at Sinai. This difficulty, which affects the very foundations of the argument of this epistle, has been met in various ways. In our note on Acts vii, 53, we have understood **angels** to be the real designation, idiomatically plural, for the one Angel of the covenant, by whom the **word** of the Sinaitic Law was truly **spoken.** The inferiority of the old dispensation would then consist in its transient Angel-form mediatorship instead of the permanent and personal form of the incarnate Son.

A full review of the mind of the Jewish Church, especially the Alexandrian, however, seems to reveal the fact that the audiences addressed by Stephen and by this epistle truly believed that, notwithstanding the very explicit words of Exodus xx, 1, asserting that God himself was the speaker, yet God spoke through an angelic medium. Whitby on this passage quotes the remarkable words of Philo, that God spoke at Sinai, κελεύσας ἠχὴν ἀόρατον ἐν ἀέρι δημιουργηθῆναι, by *commanding an invisible sound to be formed in the air.* Hence, while Philo and his contemporaries would still affirm that God spoke by himself alone, he would none the less affirm that the divine speech was shaped into vocal articulation and conveyed to man by angels. This, as Whitby well says, "supposes

ceived a just recompense of reward;
3 [c]How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; [d]which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was [e]confirmed unto us by them that heard *him;*

[c] Chapter 10. 28, 29; 12. 25.—[d] Matthew 4. 17; Mark 1. 14; chapter 1. 2.—[e] Luke 1. 2.

God the Father to be the supreme Author both of the Law and the Gospel; asserting only that his ambassadors and ministers in the one were much inferior to his Ambassador and great Prophet by whom the other was revealed."

The mind of the Jewish Church underwent a great enlargement in regard to the nature of God during its residence in Babylon. From the vast plains and clear skies of that great East, where astronomy was born, new impressions were conceived of the greatness of immensity; and, consequently, grander conceptions of the omnipresence of God. The Jewish mind was thereby educated to read into the conception of Jehovah a more realized absolute Infinity. It realized more fully the vastness of the omnipresence truly expressed in the inspired words of their old revelation. It thereby never again inclined to relapse into its old idolatries. And, true to its old monotheism, it equally rejected the mythologies and idolatries of Babylon. Hence, when it was asked how so immense a Being could commune with man, it would be answered, *through angels.* But when it was asked how could the Infinite commune with even an angelic finite, there came the distinct conception of a God essential and a God manifest, yet both one. God manifestive was the Logos, the Word. St. John, in the commencement of his gospel, assumes to define the true conception of the Word. The author of this epistle still further elaborates the conception, maintaining that the Word or Son is superior to angels, and is divine; and that, therefore, the period inaugurated by his incarnation is a higher dispensation than that of its predecessor.

The following paragraph, by Delitzsch, shows how, under such experiences, the highest minds of the Jewish Church, in possession of the divine Oracles, were led towards the truths to be realized in the New Dispensation:—

"Though possibly disturbing to some minds, it must not be concealed that Philo also regards the Logos in some places as a Mediator, Paraclete, or Heavenly Intercessor. For example, in ii, 155, 25, (*vit. mos.*, iii, 14,) in explaining the priest's breastplate, (λόγιον,) he says: '*It was necessary that one who was to serve as priest to the Father of the world should have as this Paraclete,* [Advocate or Intercessor,] *the all perfected Son,* [that is, the Logos symbolized in the λόγιον,] *so as to obtain both forgiveness of sins and a supply (in abundant measure) of all good.*' Again, ii, 501, 44, [*Quis, rer. div. her.*, § 42,] speaking of the cloud which stood between Israel and the Egyptians, (Exod. xiv, 19,) he thus applies it to the Logos: '*The all producing Father vouchsafed to this Logos, as leader of the angelic host, and eldest of all existences, that He should stand as the boundary between created things and the Creator. And he* (the Logos) *is himself an intercessor for mortality in its longings after the incorruptible, and an ambassador from the Lord of all to that which is His subject.*' In this way the Logos exhibits Himself as [Mediator] μεσίτης, (so He is frequently styled by Philo,) or, as the personal covenant, (i, 960, 12, *De Somn.*, ii, 36,) and interposer, συναγωγός, between God and man, (i, 144. 3, *Lib. de Cherub*, § 9.) Surely in all this we must recognise dawnings of New Testament light."

3. **How shall we**—Both Christians and all who hear the **word spoken. Escape**—Namely, the **recompense** suited in severity to the new conditions. **So great salvation**—Its greatness being here measured by the greatness of the Mediator who brings it, the clearness by which it is attested, the price (verse 9) which it cost, and the glory to which it brings. **At the first**—At the commencement of the new revelation. **Confirmed unto us**

4 [f]God also bearing *them* witness, [g]both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and [2h]gifts of the Holy Ghost, [i]according to his own will?

5 For unto the angels hath he

[f] Mark 16. 20; Acts 14. 3; 19. 11; Rom. 15. 18; 1 Cor. 2. 4.——[g] Acts 2. 22, 43.

2 Or, *distributions*.——[h] 1 Cor. 12. 4, 7, 11.——[i] Eph. 1. 5, 9.

...heard him—That Paul never **heard** the living Christ **at the first,** we have recognised in our note to Acts ix, 1. So that this statement perfectly accords with Paul's authorship of the epistle. Lünemann and others, indeed, argue that Paul always claims that he derived his Gospel not from men, but from Christ, and so could not have written these words or this epistle. But, certainly, Paul does not ever claim that he was a personal hearer of the teachings of Jesus, or an eye-witness of his miracles. How he acquired his knowledge of the *facts* of Christ's history we have discussed in our note, Acts ix, 23. It is the doctrinal interpretation of those facts which he claimed to have obtained by revelation. We have shown in our notes on Acts viii, 1–4, that the Pentecostal Church was dispersed, and succeeded by a later body of believers. The Hebrews, to whom this epistle was written, assuming them to be Jerusalemite and Palestinian Jews, received their knowledge of Christ's history from living testimony, as did Paul. Compare our notes on Luke i, 1–3. Nevertheless the **we** and **us** here do not literally or necessarily include the apostle; but may be simply used from delicacy, as a modest identification of himself with his hearers. The first person plural is used six times in 1–3, where it is clear that Paul does not mean himself. Stuart has abundantly shown this self-identification with his readers to be Paul's custom, both in this epistle and elsewhere, adducing a mass of instances, as follows: "See ii, 1, 3; iii, 6; iv, 1, 2, 11, 13, 16; vi, 1–3, 18, 19; x, 22–26, 39; xi, 40; xii, 1, 9, 10, 28; xiii, 10, 13, 15. He also uses *we* or *ye* indifferently for the persons whom he addresses; for example: Heb. iv, 1, *let us fear . . . lest any of you*, etc.; *we*, in xii, 1, 2; *ye*, in xii, 3–8; *we*, in xii, 9, 10; *ye*, in xii, 17, 18, 22, 25; *we*, in xiii, 14, 18, and often in the same way elsewhere, the address being still most manifestly made to the very same persons. He often employs, also, the first person plural to designate *merely himself;* as for example, in Heb. ii, 5; vi, 9, 11; xiii, 18. This, in like manner, he interchanges with the first person singular; for example, xiii, 18; compare xiii, 19, 22, 23. The same use of the first person plural runs through all the Pauline epistles; for example, *we* and *I* for the writer himself, Gal. i, 8: comp. i, 9–24, Gal. ii, 5; comp. ii, 1–4, and ii, 6, 7, and so very often elsewhere. So *we* and *you* for the persons addressed, Gal. iii, 1–12; iii, 13–25; iii, 26–29; iv, 3–5; iv. 6–20; iv, 26–31, and elsewhere." The passage, with the entire class of facts, is, therefore, not a disproof, but rather a *proof*, of the Pauline origin of this epistle; as it shows a full conformity with the apostle's habit of using the pronouns. See our note on 1 Cor. xv, 51.

4. Not angels, but Jesus, Lord of this dispensation, 5-8.

4. **Bearing...witness**—While **the Lord** was main speaker, God corroborated the divinity of his person and the truth of his announcements with **signs and wonders. Signs** implies their significance as proofs; **wonders** their startling supernaturalism; **miracles** their divine power, as dealings of omnipotence. **Gifts**—Rather, *distributions*, distributive impartations. **Will**—And according with his divine wisdom. The apostles could not work miracles at their **own will.**

5. **For**—Illustration. All this danger of offending a divine dignity is true, **for** Christ is lord of our dispensation. The development of thought is this: verse 5 declares that **angels** rule not this dispensation: verses 6–8 quote the psalmist's description of **man,** (as in his first paradisaic state,) made ideal ruler of the lower creation: verse 8 declares how complete that supremacy was, nothing being excepted: but it **adds** that **now,** (since the fall,) that

not put in subjection [k] the world to come, whereof we speak. **6** But one in a certain place testified, saying, [l] What is man, that thou art

[k] Chapter 6. 5; 2 Peter 3. 13.

[l] Job 7. 17; Psalm 8. 4; 144. 3.

subjection is annulled: verse 9 describes that supremacy potentially restored in one, namely, **Jesus,** who is divinely so exalted as that he may be a glorious atoning sufferer for *every man.* It is this glorious divine Sufferer who, identifying himself with man by being man, restores the primitive exaltation of **man.** Beautifully does our author meet those who would revolt from Christ on account of the suffering of the cross, by showing that it was a suffering glorified by the divinity of the Sufferer. **Unto the angels**—Not only was the Law given through **angels,** but the entire old dispensation was rife with angelic overrulings, either of subordinate angels or transient phenomena of the Angel-Jehovah, who thus anticipated in shadow his incarnation. That angelic guidance led Israel from Egypt. Moses declares, (Num. xx, 16:) "When we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt." And God says, (Exod. xxiii, 20:) "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." And verse 23: "Mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites... and I will cut them off." And so the last of the prophets, Malachi, (iii, 1,) predicts the incarnate Lord himself under the title "Messenger (or Angel) of the Covenant." It was not until the time of the Captivity that Israel came fully to form the conception, as we learn from Daniel, that even secular nations were overruled by angels. Daniel x, 13, 20; xii, 1. Against Michael, the prince of the people of God, there stood a "prince of Persia" and "of Grecia." The Jewish doctors then read the same idea into Deuteronomy xxxii, 8, which the Seventy translates, "When the Almighty divided the nations, he set the borders of them according to the number of the angels of God." This, Rabbi Menahem paraphrases, "He placed seventy angels over the seventy nations." See our note preceding Luke x, 1. But under our present dispensation angels are in the background. Even popular imagination, when, at the present day, it sees supernatural phenomena, never sees them in an angelic form. **World**—Not *æon,* the time-**world,** nor *cosmos,* the frame-**world,** but *oikomenē,* the inhabited **world,** or territory; and so the **world** more or less completely of human population and territory. Matt. xxiv, 14; Luke ii, 1; iv, 5; xxi, 26; Acts xi, 28; xvii, 6, 31; xix, 27; xxiv, 5; Rom. x, 18; Rev. iii, 10; xii, 9; xvi, 14. **World to come**—Buxtorf says: "By 'world to come,' some Jews understand the world which is to be after the destruction of this inferior world, and after the resurrection of dead men, when their souls will again be united with their bodies. Others, by 'world to come" understand the *days of the Messiah,* in which, that is, the Messiah shall come, whom they still expect, and that he will reign temporally in this world." In the New Testament, when speaking from a Christian standpoint, the **world to come** would signify the world beyond the judgment-day, as in Matt. xii, 32: but speaking from the Jewish standpoint, as here, the phrase signifies *the days of the Messiah,* the incoming period between the first and second advent. So in the Septuagint of Isa. ix, 6, Christ is called *ὁ πατὴρ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος, the Father of the age* or *time-world to come,* (English translation, "the everlasting Father.") See notes on 1 Cor. x, 11; Eph. i, 10. **Whereof we speak**—Which is the subject of verses 1–4.

6. **But one**—The indefiniteness of the quotation compliments his readers, by presupposing that they know all about the books quoted. The division into chapters and verses for easy reference did not exist in the apostle's day. **One**—You know who. **In a certain place**—You know where. This was a customary style of quotation with Philo and the Rabbies. The quo-

mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? **7** Thou madest him [3] a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: **8** [m] Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him[n] he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now [n] we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, [o] who was made a little lower than the angels [4] for the suffering of death, [p] crowned with glory and honour; that he

3 Or, *a little while inferior to.*—*m* Matt. 28: 18; 1 Cor. 15. 27; Eph. 1. 22; chap. 1. 13.

n 1 Cor. 15. 25.—*o* Phil. 2. 7-9.—4 Or, *by.*—*p* Acts 2. 33.

tation is from Psa. viii, and is David's pensive words on contemplating the glory of the heavens above, and the insignificant magnitude of man below. Modern astronomy reads a deeper meaning into the words than David's science knew. It is, indeed, a wonderful thing that so minute a body as **man** should be distinguished above the vast globes that swim through immensity. But an immortal, intelligent being is of more value than an infinite number of globes of dead matter. They might just as well be nonexistent, leaving pure space alone, except as they may serve the welfare of an intelligent being. **Man...son of man**—An expressive parallelism. Jesus assumed to himself the epithet **son of man** as expressive of his humiliation. We see no direct reference by the psalmist to Christ. **Visitest**—As a physician does a patient, or as a patron does his favourite.

7. **Little lower than the angels**—Unfallen man belonged to a high order, but the **angels** were a grade above him. **Set...hands**—A reference to the Genesis history, in which primeval man is exhibited as lord of the lower creation.

8. **Left nothing**—The supremacy was complete, leaving no exception, and no rebellion such as sin afterwards produced, and as exists in the **now** of the following sentence. **But now**—Since the fall, and before the renovation. **Not yet**—As will be in the renewal.

5. That lordship assumed that he might suffer for and with our humanity, 9-18.

9. We see **not yet** a full subjection; the psalmist's ideal description is but imperfectly realized; **but** we do see the dawn of a better state. We see one **Jesus**, who, like **man**, is below the angels, yet **crowned** with divinity, that he might be the suffering redeemer for every other **man**. The order of the Greek words is nearly as follows: *One, however, a little somewhat lower than angels we do see,* (namely,) *Jesus, for the sake of the suffering of death, with glory and honour crowned, in order that by grace of God he, in behalf of every man, might taste of death.* Alford says here that **Jesus** is unemphatic, being a mere supply to tell us who is meant by the previous descriptive phrase. On the contrary, the previous descriptive phrase holds the mind in suspense to fall with emphasis on the word **Jesus**, an emphasis destroyed by our translators' reversing the order. See note on verse 14. **Jesus**, the Saviour's most purely human name, is used because pure humanity, in its earthly state, is being described, in whose line **Jesus** is presented. The human **Jesus** is thence the basis of the **crowned**, which follows; a crowning in view, and with purpose of, his atoning death. He is **crowned with glory and honour** in a higher sense than primeval **man**, (verse 7,) by being divinized. In primeval **man** the blessed Spirit dwelt in elevating power; in the divine **man** "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Jesus's being **crowned**, as man, with divinity, that is, **glory and honour**, was in order to render the efficacy of his death extensive to **every man**. He was human, that he might die; he was divine, that he might redeem. **By the grace of God**—It was **by grace** of the Father both to him and to us, that the **man** Jesus was **crowned** with divinity that he might efficiently atone. **Taste**

by the grace of God should taste death [q] for every man. **10** [r] For it became him, [s] for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make [t] the captain of their salvation [u] perfect through sufferings. **11** For [v] both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified [w] *are* all of one: for which cause [x] he is

q John 3. 16; 12. 32; Rom. 5. 18; 8. 32; 2 Cor. 5. 15; 1 Tim. 2. 6; 1 John 2. 2; Rev. 5. 9.——*r* Luke 24. 46.——*s* Rom. 11. 36.

t Acts 3. 15; 5. 31; chap. 12. 2.——*u* Luke 13. 32; chap. 5. 9.——*v* Chap. 10. 10, 14.——*w* Acts 17. 26.——*x* Matt. 28. 10; John 20. 17; Rom. 8. 29.

death—Experience **death**; the experience being expressed by one of our experiential senses. The term **taste** for experience is frequently used by ancient writers, as *taste of labour, taste of bitter grief, taste of liberty.* It here suggests, though it does not expressly include, the ideas of the brevity, the reality, and the bitterness **of death.** Compare Matthew xvi, 28; Mark ix, 1; Luke ix, 27; John viii, 52. **For every man**—The Greek might be read as neuter, *for all*, that is, humanity, or the race. But later commentators, as Lünemann, agree that it truly means **every man,** in order to emphasize the fact that Christ's death not merely embraces the collective race, but expressly comes in contact upon every individual of the race.

10. **It became him**—It was suitable to the wisdom and goodness of God, who saw that the **sufferings** of one Son were the truest method and condition for **bringing many sons unto glory.** This *becomingness* of the suffering Messiah, our author adduces to convince and console those wavering Hebrews who desired a glorious, but disliked a crucified, Saviour. **For whom...by whom...all**—The author of our salvation is the author and proprietor of **all.** No method but that which **became him**—which was worthy of his dignity as God of the universe—could be adopted. **Many sons**—Who might be all the race, **every man,** if **every man** would consent. The divine idea, the brotherhood of Christ, extends to **every man.** The failure is not upon the part of God, but of **man.** Note on Eph. i, 10. **Captain**—Rendered in Acts iii, 15, *prince.* The word signifies doubly *an author* or originator, and a military *leader.* It here includes both, and especially the latter, as presenting the image of Christ leading **many unto glory. Perfect**—Fitted and completed perfectly as the great leader of **salvation. Through sufferings**—So far from being a ground of misgiving, O ye tremulous Hebrews, the **sufferings** of our **Captain** are requisite in order to his perfect fitness and success in his divine enterprise. And let all sufferers know, throughout this suffering world, that as he was glorified through suffering, so our **sufferings** are glorified through him. Happy for us if our **sufferings** make us **perfect** as brethren of the Son. For this is the true mission of sorrow—to solidify our virtues by trial, to deepen our characters by solemn experiences.

11. **For**—Reason for this becomingness of Jesus' **sufferings;** based upon the need of his identification with his **brethren. They who are sanctified**—Are being **sanctified;** the present tense of the Greek participle implying a now continuous process, carried on unto the final glorification. Hence Christians are all, more or less perfectly, "saints." According to x, 10, 14, this is wrought through the efficacy of Christ's death. But the Greek word for *sanctify*, here, should not therefore be rendered (as by Stuart and others) *expiate.* **All of one**—The English, here, would suggest *race*, or *nature*, to be added; but the Greek word for **one** is masculine, and requires *father*, or *God.* This brings us to the same essential meaning as lineage, or race. Jesus is a true man, in order that as man brought sin and death, so a man should bring holiness and life. And still more, by being man he is brother with us, enabled by his humanity to sympathize with us, and by his divinity to so rise as that we may be raised as one with him to the heights of

not ashamed to call them brethren, **12** Saying, [y] I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. **13** And again, [z] I will put my trust in him. And again, [a] Behold, I and the children [b] which God hath given me. **14** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [c] also himself likewise took part of the same; [d] that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

y Psa. 22. 22.—*z* Psa. 18. 2; Isaiah 12. 2.—*a* Isaiah 8. 18.—*b* John 10. 29; 17. 6, 9.

c John 1. 14; Rom. 8. 3; Phil. 2. 7.—*d* 1 Cor. 15. 54; Col. 2. 15; 2 Tim. 1. 10.

glory **Not ashamed**—For it is by a most wonderful and divine condescension that the divine **Son** becomes with us a human *son*. **Brethren**—Thereby we become brother to the God-man.

12. **Saying**—Psalm xxii, 22, where see note. The **I** refers to the Messiah, this being held by the Jewish Church as a Messianic psalm. **My brethren**—Those whose nature he had assumed, and renewed by redemption.

13. **And again**—Isa. viii, 17. The words in our English version are, "I will wait upon the Lord;" but in the Septuagint Greek they are as here quoted verbatim. The **I** is here applied to Christ. The passage can hardly be considered as Messianic in Isaiah. Words applied by the prophet to himself as a man, are here as a man applied to Christ. The same words, **I will put my trust in him**, are found in the Greek of the Septuagint of 2 Sam. xxii, 3, with which similar words in Psalm xviii, 3 closely correspond. But the reference here is, doubtless, to Isaiah's words. **And again**—Quoted from Isaiah's next verse. Both quotations imply that the same Christ trusted, like his **brethren**, in God, and that he presented **the children** of God, by God to him **given**, before the God who had **given** them. They were not Christ's **children**, but God's, and Christ's **brethren**.

14. **Forasmuch then**—This inference reverts back to close of verse 11, in support of which 12 and 13 are citations. This verse reasserts the main thought, which beautifully interprets, to the dubious Christian Jew, the glory of the condescension of the eternal **Son**, the divine Logos, in assuming our nature that he might be capable of **death**. **Flesh and blood**—Note, 1 Cor. xv, 50. The true reading is, **blood and flesh**, in which the **blood**, as the more immediate residence of the life and soul, is mentioned first. Both **blood and flesh** mean the bodily nature as impregnated with sensitivity and susceptibility to impressions, shared by both man and lower animals, whereby it becomes the basis of soul and spirit in man. This assumption of a sensitive body was in order **that** he might be capable of human **death**, and might, **through death**, destroy the author of **death**. **Destroy**—The Greek word is used, as Alford says, twenty-five times by St. Paul. It often signifies, to put out of existence, (as Rom. vi, 6, 1 Cor. xv, 24,) and hence this might be a favourite text with those who believe in the annihilation of the devil. But it also signifies *to ruin, to bring to naught, to despoil*, as Luke xiii, 7, Rom. iii, 3, 2 Thess. ii, 8, where see note. The Apocryphal Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs uses the word in the phrase, "He shall destroy Belial and those serving him." **Had the power of death**—Christ (Rev. i, 18) has the "keys of hell and of death," that is, to deliver and bring forth to a resurrection; Satan has **the power**, through sin, **of** introducing **death**. Hence he was a murderer from the beginning. The rabbies carried this idea so far as to teach that Samael was the angel of death, inflicting it whenever a man dies. The antithesis, **through death ... destroy ... death**, strikingly expresses the work of the dying Redeemer. And not until this antithesis is completed are we brought in the sentence, with closing emphasis, to the name of the murderer—**the devil**. See note on verse 9.

15 And deliver them, who [e] through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. **16** For verily [b] he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. **17** Wherefore in all things it behooved him [f] to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be [g] a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

[e] Luke 1. 74; Rom. 8. 15; 2 Tim. 1. 7.—[b] Gr., *he taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold.*—[f] Phil. 2 7.—[g] Chap. 4. 15; 5. 1, 2.

15. The destruction of the destroyer is a final act. Rev. xx, 10. But there is an earlier process of deliverance in progress. It is a deliverance even now from that **bondage** caused by the **fear of death.** But for sin and Satan men would have passed through the immortalizing "change," (see note on 1 Cor. xv, 51,) like Enoch and Elijah, without pain or **fear.** But **death** is now the king of terrors. To the atheist and the skeptic **death** is an endless night; to the heathen a land of shadows; to the sinner a vista of woe. It is Christ who in death has conquered death, and has opened to the believer's faith the blessed vision of life and immortality. Hence the saints of God have found their death beds scenes of joy and triumph, and have left many a precious testimony of their deliverance from **fear.**

16. **Took not on him**—This verb signifies primitively to *grasp*, to take hold of; generally with some degree of force or earnestness. This *taking* is for the purpose of aid, or to possess and appropriate. Hence a difference of opinion between commentators; some of whom render it as in our translation, and others (as Alford) translate it simply "helpeth." The word truly includes both ideas, namely, to forcibly grasp, to seize, and a purpose thereby to aid, to rescue, to redeem. Our author did not mean simply to *help*, otherwise he would have used the ordinary Greek verb for *to help;* but he means to help by grasping forcibly **the seed of Abraham.** And the very word **seed** implies a lineage genetically assumed. The previous verses 14, 15, affirm Christ's partaking our nature to deliver us from fear of death; this verse confirms that thought by specifying his, omitting angels and redemptively assuming manhood; and ver. 17 urges the perfect fitness of that assumption. **Seed of Abraham**—A touching fact for these Hebrews, sons of **Abraham,** whose special lineage Christ assumed. He was their Abrahamic brother, and they were of the Messianic family of man. Why shrink from that suffering cross, which was truly glorious to the Sufferer and honouring to a Hebrew?

17. **Wherefore**—Deduction from the preceding. If, to redeem us, he assumed our nature, he must complete his brotherhood with us by suffering **like unto** us. **In all things**—Birth, pain, and death included. **Might be**—Rather, **might** *become.* **Merciful**—The statement quoted from Calvin by Alford, with approval, must not be for a moment accepted: "Not that the Son of God needed to be formed by experience to a feeling of mercy, but because we could not otherwise be persuaded that he was clement, and inclined to render us aid." The plain doctrine is not merely that such a fact took place to *give us assurance of mercy,* (though that was one point to be received,) but that such an assemblage of elements was formed into the divine-human Jesus, that a genuine human sympathy might truly exist. It was not to be a mere assuring *show,* but a most beneficent *reality.* There was not merely a divine mind forming anthropomorphic conceptions, but a human mind feeling human sympathies. **High priest**—This very central term in this epistle is now, for the first time, arrived at; the preparation for its introduction was commenced at verse 15. Verse 14 affirms the necessity of Christ's **death,** in order to become the conqueror of **death;** this affirms the necessity of his human suffering, that he might sympathize with us sufferers. **Faithful**—Embracing the double meaning of fidelity and of re-

18 [h]For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

h Chapter 4. 15, 16; 5. 2; 7. 25.

liability. Christ is true to his mission, and is trustworthy for its completion. **Make reconciliation for**—The Greek word signifies, *to make propitious.* The Greek adjective of the same verb, Ἱλαρός, *hilaros*, (from which comes our English word *hilarity,*) is equivalent to our adjective *propitious;* and the word, in its various forms, was customarily applied by the Greeks to their gods when induced by expiation to be gracious: hence, in its biblical use, the verb means such a satisfaction sacrificially made to justice, as that God may deal with us in mercy. Anger can be ascribed to God only as a sense of justice and of subjective purpose against sin. When the demands of justice are obviated, we may behold that purpose of justice obviated, and the face of God beaming upon us in unobstructed benefaction. The objective of the verb is **sins,** and the meaning is, that Christ's death so reaches and affects our sins as that God may be propitious to us. **Of the people**—The Old Testament phrase for the Israelite **people,** enlarged to a world-wide sense.

18. **For**—To illustrate the word *sufferings* by the particular case of *temptation.* **Being tempted**—An historical confirmation of Matt. iv, 1–11. **He is able**—We are connected to the man Jesus by a pure and beautiful human sympathy. Abstract theism, presenting a pure infinite, fails to awaken our human affections until deity is to us humanized. But in Jesus we find a divine brother. And, through Jesus, infinite righteousness is able to deal with us, not by the rule of the infinitely perfect law, but according to the measure of human weakness. Under the Old Testament the psalmist could say, "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." In Jesus we find one who has **suffered** as we, and been **tempted** like us, and with a human sympathy for us can bring a divine **succour** to us.

On this chapter we note:—1. Pure theism, as in Judaism, (whether philonean, rabbinical, or modern,) as in Mohammedanism and in modern deism, is cold and barren, (throwing God to an infinite distance upward,) destitute of that element of tenderness embodied in the divine Jesus, and so beautifully portrayed in the closing part of this chapter. There is added, also, especially in Mohammedanism, a fierceness, a fanaticism, which is adverse to a genial civilization, and holds its subjects in a dreary semi-barbarism. Just so far, too, as the incarnation is rejected from a professed Christianity, the piety tends towards a cold morality, and the religion to become a mere philosophy. 2. Yet while we deeply recognise the tender sympathy of the blessed Jesus, neither thought nor language should forget a most profound reverence. We must not assume his interference in our trifling secular affairs, nor speak of him in fondling or amatory language. It is as our sympathizing Saviour from temptation, sin, and death, that we are ever reverently to contemplate him.

CHAPTER III.

II. The Son as Divine Apostle fully contemplated, iii, 1–iv, 13.

1. Superior as Son to Moses, who was only servant, 1-6.

Having, in the first two chapters, summarily presented the Son as Apostle, beaming forth from the fountain of divinity and becoming incarnate High Priest, St. Paul now proceeds to a more full consideration of him first as **Apostle.**

1. **Wherefore**—In view of the development of Christ as *sent* from the bosom of the Eternal, (see note i, 3,) and emerging on earth as our **Apostle** and *propitiator,* thus far portrayed. **Holy brethren**—Nowhere else is the

CHAPTER III.

WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of [a]the heavenly call-

a Rom. 1. 7; 1 Cor. 1. 2; Eph. 4. 1; Phil. 3. 14.

ing, consider [b] the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Je-

[b] Rom. 15. 8; chap. 2. 17; 5. 5; 8. 1; 10. 21.

epithet **holy** thus applied to **brethren,** although **brethren** is several times used in this epistle without the epithet. Probably **holy** is here used slightly in the Old Testament sense of the word, (see note on 1 Cor. vii, 14,) because the writer is about to parallel their position under Christ with their old position as Hebrews under Moses. They are the **holy** under the new dispensation, as Israel was under the old. **Calling**—See notes on 1 Cor. i, 1; vii, 20. The **calling,** here, is used very much in the sense of 1 Cor. vii, 20, to denote the permanent state resulting from permanent obedience to the call, and which has solidified into the correlative **profession** soon named. **Heavenly**—As coming directly from *heaven* through our divine **Apostle.** xii, 25. **Consider**—Steadily contemplate and study. You have had him introductorily presented in his twofold offices in the first two chapters. Let us now fully and steadily analyze his nature in each office. **Apostle**—One *sent,* a *legate.* So John xx, 21, "As my Father hath *sent* me, even so send I you." The twelve were the human apostles of Christ; Christ was the divine **Apostle** of God. He alone, as sent **Son,** speaks to us as antithesis to the whole body of prophets, (i, 1, 2;) nay, he is an outbeaming radiation *sent* from the divine Essence, (i, 3;) he thence took part of our flesh, (i, 14.) **And High Priest**—Briefly unfolded in i, 14–18, (as **Apostle** is in i, 1–13,) and fully developed in iv, 14–x, 18. As God's **Apostle** or Legate, Christ is super-angelic representative of God on earth; he is ruling administrator over the incoming dispensation, ii, 5–8; he is the glorious Messiah. And as humanized Sufferer (ii, 9–18) he is our High Priest. Our "Hebrews" here addressed rejoiced in the grandeur of the divine **Apostle,** the glorious Messiah, but were shrinking almost to apostasy from the degradation of the **High Priest,** the suffering Messiah. Our St. Paul will

sus; **2** Who was faithful to him that [1] appointed him, as also [c] Mo-

1 Gr., *made,* 1 Sam. 12. 6.—c Num. 12. 7.

now so unfold both as to confirm their view of the grandeur of the *exaltation,* and reconstruct their view of the equal grandeur and pathos of the *humiliation.* **Of our profession**—Or, rather, *confession.* Not simply as one we *confess;* for the word embraces all the truths and beings we *confess* as Christians; our whole confession of faith; Jesus Christ being the central figure and object in that confession and faith. **Christ Jesus**—Words signify anointed or *Messiah Saviour.*

2. **Faithful**—Perfectly and absolutely true to all his trusts as legate. **Appointed**—Literally, *made.* Allusion is here had to 1 Sam. xii, 6, where it is said, "the Lord that *advanced* (Gr. Septuagint, *made*) Moses and Aaron." The word, as here applied to Christ, should not be rendered *created,* as by Alford, but *constituted,* including, doubtless, his being brought into incarnate existence, not merely his *appointment* to his *legation.* **As also Moses**—This image of a **house** is suggested by Num. xii, 7: "My servant Moses . . . is faithful in all mine *house.*" The word **house** symbolizes the dispensation, or theocratic kingdom. Here is an analogy between Moses and Christ; they are similar in faithfulness, yet there is a great superiority on one side. **House**—In this whole passage (verses 2–6) the Greek word for **house** includes not only the building or material structure, but all the furnishings, family and servants, it contains to make it a complete establishment. And so the word **builded,** in the following verses, includes not merely the architecture, but the complete *establishing,* of the **house** and its contents. **His**—Many commentators refer here, as in verse 6, to God; but a more natural construction refers them to Moses and to Christ. Each of these divine legates had, under **God,** (ver. 4,) his own **house;** yet successively, under Moses and Christ, the **house** is the same one **house,** and Christ, as **Son,** is underlying proprietor even of

ses *was faithful* in all his house. **3** For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as [d] he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. **4** For every house is builded by some *man;* but [e] he that built all things *is* God. **5** [f] And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house as [g] a servant, [h] for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; **6** But Christ as [i] a son over his own house; [k] whose house are we, [l] if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

d Zech. 6. 12; Matt. 16. 18.——*e* Eph. 2. 10; 3. 9; chap. 1. 2.——*f* Verse 2.——*g* Exod. 14. 31; Num. 12. 7; Deut. 3. 24; Josh. 1. 2.——*h* Deut. 18. 15.

i Chap. 1. 2.——*k* 1 Cor. 3. 16; 2 Cor. 6. 16, Eph. 2. 21; 1 Tim. 3. 15; 1 Pet. 2. 5.——*l* Verse 14; Matt. 10. 22; Rom. 5. 2; Col. 1. 23; chap. 6. 11.

the **house** of Moses, who is but **servant** or steward.

3. **This man**—Here, as in verse 4, the italics show that the word **man** is not in the Greek, but is supplied by the translators. The writer uses only the pronoun **this** *one.* **Builded**—Founded, erected, furnished, and filled it with family and domestics. See note on verse 2. **Than the house**—Moses was, as **servant,** (verse 5,) part of **the house;** Christ, as **Son,** was, under **God,** instrumental builder, heir, and proprietor. Hence his **more glory.**

4. **Every house**—And, therefore, *this house*—has its special builder. And this divine house-building of the two dispensations is like all others, and pre-eminently so, under the divine all-builder, **God.** As *apostles,* neither is independent, both being under, as well as from, a divine Founder, by whom both are **appointed.** The whole structure is established by **God** supreme. This attribution of all to **God,** which perplexes Delitzsch, is in Paul's style. See 2 Cor. i, 21, with our note.

5. **Was faithful**—Against the Marcionites, who renounced Moses and the old dispensation, our author is generous and just to Moses. He depreciates not him; he only exalts Christ. The Hebrews are not shocked by any repudiation of their great founder; they are only pointed to a greater. **As a servant**—Not a slave, but a steward, superior to the family domestics, yet subordinate to the **Son. Things . . . spoken after**—Namely, the revelations made in the **after,** or gospel, dispensation. It was the office of Moses to establish a dispensation which should be a **testimony,** a witness, a memento of future **things** to be done and **spoken after** his dispensation was past. Hence, he is prior in time but subordinate in position and purpose. And our gospel dispensation verifies itself by his **testimony.**

6. **But**—After this conceded tribute to Moses we next have Christ's superiority. Moses was **in,** Christ is **over,** the house. **Own** expresses an emphasis not in the Greek; the same pronoun for **his** is used of Moses (verse 5) and of Christ here. **Whose**—Referring to Christ. For having established under this striking image of **house** Christ's superiority as proprietor of the dispensations, our apostle makes a beautiful transition from this divine proprietorship to the solemn warning against apostasy from Christ, which now follows. **We**—The writer and his Hebrew Christian brethren. They **are** now part of the **house;** they will be permanent part, **if.** For it is clear that the writer assumes that they **are** now in possession of a true **confidence** and **rejoicing,** which they have only to **hold fast.** The whole of the remainder of the chapter assumes that they are now true Christians; the exhortation is, to stay just as they are: the great fear is that they will not, but that they will apostatize and finally perish. **Confidence**—Greek, *free, bold utterance;* of which the inward foundation is **confidence** of faith and feeling. **Rejoicing**—Or, *exultation.* **Confidence** is the firm, solid assurance; **rejoicing** is the joyful hope and glorying built on that solid foundation. **Firm**—With unmovableness. **End** of our probationary life. At that **end** all danger is at an **end.** We then *cannot* fall. For though we still be free agents, intrinsi-

7 Wherefore as [m] the Holy Ghost saith, [n] To day if ye will hear his voice, **8** [o] Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: **9** When your fathers tempted me,

m 2 Samuel 23. 2; Acts 1. 16.—*n* Verse 15; Psalm 95. 7.

o Exodus 8. 15; 1 Samuel 6. 6; 2 Kings 17. 14; Neh. 9. 16; Job 9. 4; Prov. 28. 14.

proved me, and saw my works forty years. **10** Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. **11** So I sware in my wrath,

cally able to choose wrong in the blessed paradise, there is no wrong to choose. Our hearts will be so attuned with the heart of the holy Christ that an unholy emotion cannot enter. Our spirits, filled with the blessed Spirit, can give no entrance to an unholy thought. We are no longer "prisoners of hope," but prisoners of everlasting joy. We are immovable parts of Christ's eternal **house.** The clause **unto the end,** has been rejected, as being really inserted here from verse 14. Delitzsch thinks our apostle would not use the phrase twice. Unreasonably, for it is truly an emphatic repetition, a repetition of what is really *the point* of the whole epistle. It is retained by the best authorities; by Tischendorf in the fourth edition of his Testament.

2. Dread warnings against disobedience to the Son, like the Jews' disobedience to Moses, iii, 7-iv, 13.

As Christ stands parallel to Moses, so our Christian Hebrews stand parallel to ancient Israel, and so must take warning by Israel's fatal example.

a. *Israel's failure to attain God's rest portrayed as warning,* 7–11.

7. **Wherefore**—In view of the fact that your forming a part of Christ's eternal **house** depends on your **hold fast. Holy Ghost saith**—In Psa. xcv, 7–11. Our author assumes that what the psalm says, **the Holy Ghost saith;** that is, the psalm is inspired. **As**—The **so** corresponding to this **as** is implied at verse 12, before **Take heed. The Holy Ghost** in the ancient psalm utters all the reproofs of 7–11, **so** (verse 12,) do you **take heed.** See our note on verse 12. The warning to the old Mosaic era of the **house** (verse 2) is still sounding from **the Holy Ghost** in your ears. **To-day**—Since you have been so little attentive in past days, let this be the **day** to **hear his,** God's, **voice.**

8. **Provocation...temptation**—In Exod. xvii, 7, at the smiting of the rock to bring water for the murmuring people, it is said that Moses "called the name of the place Massah, [*temptation,*] and Meribah, [*bitterness,*] because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not." The word **provocation,** here, is the Septuagint translation of Meribah, and **temptation** of Massah. **Wilderness**—Of Zin.

9. **Tempted...proved**—Made trial—ascertained. **Forty years**—The perversity of the people at Meribah was at the beginning of this **forty years.** In the psalm the **forty years** is in the following verse, measuring the time in which **I was grieved.** Our author, in thought, measures the same period, though he varies the phrase. It was, also, **forty years** between the crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish race. The period had nearly expired when this epistle was written

10. **That generation**—Of the forty years. **Heart**—Note, Romans x, 10 **Not known**—Not merely a passive ignorance, but a positive ignoring, a refusing to know. **My ways—My works,** in verse 9, were the divine miracles and revelations; **my ways,** here, are the Lord's righteous dealings with free-agents. They had so ignored God's **ways** and modes of government as to act as if there were no God.

11. **I sware**—Made an affirmation, to be held as sure and firm as the divine existence. So Num. xiv, 21, "As truly as I live;" and verses 28, 29, "As truly as I live... your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness." **My rest**—To the Israelites the words meant a failure to

[2]They shall not enter into my rest.
12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. **13** But [p]exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
14 For we are made partakers of Christ, [q]if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;
15 While it is said,

2 Gr., *If they shall enter.*—*p* Acts 11. 23; 1 Thessalonians 2. 11; 2 Timothy 4. 2.—*q* Ver. 6.

attain Canaan; with the deeper implications underlying of a death under the divine **wrath.** To the spiritual Israel the literal Canaan had no significance except as a type of the eternal **rest.**

b. *Application of Israel's sad example in warning to* **you**, 12–15.

12. **Take heed**—To be connected immediately with the **as** of verse 7, where see note. As the Holy Ghost gave the warnings of verses 7–12, so, in accordance therewith, do you **take heed** of apostatizing **as** your **fathers** apostatized and perished. **In any of you**—**You**, emphatic; **in**...**you**, as in the lost apostates of old. And our author assumes that to apostatize from Christ is not merely to relapse into a harmless Judaism; it is to fall into sin and death. **Heart of unbelief**—For unbelief of divine truth springs from an evil temper. If men's hearts were right, their belief would be right. The drunkard will not believe the truths of temperance doctrines because he loves ardent spirits. The knave will not believe the precepts of conscience because he loves the gains of fraud. The atheist rejects God because he dislikes God. Note on John iii, 18–21. And so the Hebrew was liable to relapse from Christ from disgust at the sufferings and lowliness of Christ. **In departing**—The unbelief would result in, be exerted in, nay, consist in, **departing.** The **evil heart,** the **unbelief,** and the **departing,** all fuse into each other and become one. **Living God** — The Old Testament phrase to distinguish Jehovah from the unliving idols. But our author boldly assumes that the **living God** has deserted old Judaism, and is in and with the Christian Church. To desert Christ is to desert the **living God.**

13. **Exhort one another**—Literal Greek, **exhort** *yourselves.* Be an entire, collective, self-exhorting Church. Let a man exhort himself, and each one **exhort** the other, and all **exhort** all. In this time of trial and dismay, mutual encouragement was the common duty. **Daily**—For each day has its danger and needs its warning and its cheer. **Called to-day**—As long as we live to use the word **to-day.** Note, John ix, 4. While our probationary day lasts, and earnestly before the hastening night comes. **Any of you**—For the Church's exhortation of itself should not be solely collective. Each individual soul is infinitely important. **Hardened** — Become spiritually insensible and hard. **Deceitfulness of sin**—Sin, the hardener and deadener of the soul, is a deceiver. It masks its own ugliness with false beauty. It cheats us with false appearances of goodness. It entangles with sophistries. The pure heart needs constant warning and watching against its deceptions. To the wavering Hebrew **the deceitfulness of sin** suggested that to adhere to a crucified Messiah was disgraceful; that the old temple worship was honourable; that it was more profitable and advantageous to agree with the popular religion and renounce Jesus.

14. **Are made**—Both in the English and the Greek the verb assumes a standpoint beyond **the end;** that is, at the judgment day, and is, therefore, expressively indicative of the future. **The beginning of our confidence**—Our commencement of Christian life. To begin, do well, and then fail, is to lose all the reward of our previous righteousness. **The end** — Of our **day** of probation.

15. **While**—Verses 14 and 15 are, it is to be noted, a single sentence. **While** refers to **hold steadfast** in verse 14. We finally partake Christ

[r] To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. **16** [s] For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. **17** But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, [t] whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? **18** And [u] to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? **19** [v] So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

r Ver. 7. —s Num. 14. 2, 4, 11, 24, 30; Deut. 1. 34, 36, 38 —t Num. 14. 22, 29, &c.; 26. 65; Psa. 106. 26; 1 Cor. 10. 5; Jude 5.—u Num. 14. 20; Deut. 1. 34, 35.—v Chap. 4. 6.

if we **hold steadfast,** or persevere **while** the **to-day** of warning and probation lasts.

c. *Was it not the unbelievers who failed of that* **rest?** *Then let us fear*, 16–iv, 2.

This paragraph is a series of questions impressing upon the Hebrews the fact that the underlying cause of Israel's destruction in the wilderness was one—**unbelief.** Verse 19. This furnishes basis for an inferential exhortation against apostasy by this same **unbelief,** commencing with the **therefore** of iv, 1, and extending to iv, 16.

16. **Some**—It is a query (depending on the Greek accent upon the Greek word for **some**) whether this verse is affirmation or question. If it be an affirmation, the meaning then is, **some** provoked, but **not all.** But the provokers, in fact, were **all** with an exceptional two—Caleb and Joshua. Nor does the train of thought require a depreciation of the practically all into a **some.** On the contrary, the force of our author's strain of warning here is increased rather by emphasizing the **all,** and overlooking the exceptions. The obvious interpretation, therefore, is to bring the verse into interrogative form, in accordance with the series of five interrogations, of which this verse contains two. Read thus: *For who, when they heard, did provoke? Was it not all that came out of Egypt by Moses?* The **for,** then, refers to the danger implied in the **if** of verse 14; the danger of failing, as the mass of Israel did, of attaining **rest** in Christ. The **for,** therefore, introduces the whole drift of the following interrogations.

The series of questions argues that it was the *provokers*, the **all,** who **sinned,** and who **believed not,** that were the subjects of God's *grief*, of his destructive *judgment*, and his menacing *oath*. The whole history shows, then, that perdition arises from **unbelief** as concludingly asserted in verse 19.

17. **Carcasses**—Literal Greek, *limbs*, meaning the skeleton bones, as of the spine, legs, and arms. In the dry climate of the East the strewn bones of corpses usually remain long undecayed, a memento of death.

19. **So we see**—Conclusion from the whole history, deeply bearing on our own case. **Unbelief**—Want, not merely of intellectual acknowledgment of the divine facts, but want of fidelity of heart and the spirit of obedience to God, and harmony with his divine and glorious purposes. Full, hearty accord with God would have made Israel great and glorious, a divine, triumphant theocracy, thrilling the world with the greatness and glory of Jehovah. As it was, Israel barely lived along until the Messiah came and chose another, a spiritual, Israel, in Israel's place. To that spiritual Israel our author now addresses the warning not to fail by like **unbelief.**

This chapter ought to have closed at close of iv, 2.

CHAPTER IV.

Our parallelism with Israel more closely stated, with stringent application. Verses 1 and 2, the **promise**—the **gospel**—is to us as to them; the same danger from unbelief—and a **rest** of which we may thereby fail.

That there remains for us a **rest,** (verses 3–9,) as well as to Israel, is demonstrated: for three *rests* are indicated in the Old Testament; namely, *first*, God's creational **rest,** (Gen. ii, 2;) *second*, the **rest** which he declared that unbelievers should not enter, (Psalm xcv, 11,) namely, Canaan; and, *third*,

CHAPTER IV.

LET [a]us therefore fear, lest a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. **2** For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but [1]the word preached did not profit them, [2]not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*. **3** [b]For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, [c]As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works

a Chap. 12. 15; Prov. 14. 16; 28. 14; Jer. 32. 40. —1 Greek, *the word of hearing.*

2 Or, *because they were not united by faith to.*—*b* Chap. 3. 14.—*c* Psa. 95. 11; chap. 3. 11.

the **rest** (typified by Canaan) implied in that psalm in the warning to those living **in** the time of **David** (verse 7) not to fail of it. These three *rests* are different, with an underlying sameness; and this third **rest,** to be entered by faith, **remaineth for the people of God,** not only **in** the time of **David,** but even in our day.

1. **Therefore**—In view of the fearful examples of apostasy in last chapter. **Let us fear**—Implying a belief in its practical possibility and an earnest desire to avoid it. **Seem**—Should appear. **To come short**—Past tense; *to have come short;* namely, after **the end** of iii, 14, and at the judgment day. Hence the **seem,** or appear, is not a false *seeming*, but an appearance of a dread reality to the eye of God and in the light of the final judgment. A direful result is this for us to **fear;** lest, after once being pardoned and sanctified, we at last are seen to have fallen and become lost.

2. **Gospel preached**—Literally, *we were evangelized;* greeted with the glad announcement, gospelized. This **gospel** of the Old Testament, identical with the **promise** of verse 1, was the glad announcement of a Canaan **rest;** ours, of a heavenly **rest. Mixed with faith—The word,** when heard, must be **mixed with faith,** as food in the stomach must be **mixed** with gastric juice in order to nourishing and vitalizing our bodies. In the received Greek text the word **mixed** is nominative singular, and agrees with **word,** and so makes a clear, good meaning as above. But another, and perhaps true, reading, makes **mixed** to be accusative plural, and agree with **them.** The words then would imply that the hearers themselves were to be **mixed** with faith. That is, so fully should the soul of the hearers be filled and impregnated with **faith,** that the soul and the **faith** may be conceived as two elements or fluids **mixed** together. **Them that heard it,** is the Greek dative. So the whole may be thus read: *The word did not profit them, as they were not impregnated with the faith fitting* (or belonging) *to the hearers of* **the word.**

d. *For us, too, remains a rest, a danger of fall by unbelief, and a stern adjudging WORD,* 3–13.

3. **For**—To unfold the nature of this our **rest,** mentioned in verse 1, as parallel to the Canaan rest of iii, 11, 18. **We**—Believers of our dispensation universally. **Do enter**—General present tense; it is the law of our present dispensation that we **do** by faith **enter** heaven. **Rest**—The digression on this term is a good instance of what has been called Paul's "going off at a word." The word **rest,** in last chapter, struck his mind impressively, and becomes a key-word for this. It is a beautiful word, soothing to the weary spirit. Indeed, eastern Buddhism feels life so heavy and **rest** so desirable as to seek for Nirvana, utter annihilation, as a most desirable repose. But that is the religion of despair, as Christianity is the religion of hope. The Christian **rest** is repose from all that is wearying in life, yet enjoyment of perfect bliss. **As he said**—Quoting again Psalm xcv. 11 to illustrate the Canaan **rest. Although**—God applies to this rest a **my** in the psalm, **although** it was not his creational rest, for his creation was **finished** long before he used the words in Psalm xcv, even **from the foundation of the world.**

By bold conception in the present passage the analogous **rest** of God at creation, of Israel in Canaan, and of the Christian in paradise, are corre-

were finished from the foundation of the world. **4** For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, [d]And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. **5** And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest. **6** Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, [e]and they to whom [3]it was first preached en-

[d] Gen. 2. 2; Exod. 20. 11; 31. 17. — [e] Chap. 3. 19. — 3 Or, *the gospel was first preached.*

tered not in because of unbelief: **7** Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, [f]To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. **8** For if [4]Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. **9** There remaineth therefore a [5]rest to the people of

[f] Psa. 95. 7; chap. 3. 7. — 4 That is, *Joshua.* — 5 Or, *keeping of a sabbath.*

lated and identified as deeply one. All are three ineffable and divine reposes after a divinely imposed task, and at bottom they are all the same blessed refreshment. Of this bottom reality Israel's **rest** in Canaan was but a rough type. But as the deaths in the wilderness under divine **wrath** implied a deeper death underlying, so the repose of Israel in Canaan implied a profounder underlying **rest.**

4. In 4 and 5 our author quotes together the two passages, (Gen. ii, 2, and Psa. xcv, 11,) in order to present the difference to the eye. **He spake**—God by the inspired writer. **Did rest**—Rest is the season of refreshment after a period of toil. And the Genesis picture of the divine **rest,** after the work of creation, is a type of all subsequent relaxation from action. For all life has this alternation of action and remission. Not only men, but animals and vegetables take repose; even the flowers have their sleep.

5. **And in this place again**—In Psa. xcv, quoted previously. **If**—An elliptical form of the divine oath, supposed, when used by men, to be preceded by a fearful penalty upon perjury, as "So do God to me, and more also, **if**," etc. 2 Sam. iii, 35. **My rest**—Not the **my rest** of the creation, but **my** appointed **rest** for Israel in Canaan.

6. Now for the third **rest,** namely, that for the obedient **in** the days of **David,** long after the abode in Canaan. **It remaineth**—As a clear inference from the words in Psalm xcv, quoted last verse. **Must**—The word not in the Greek. Alford rightly renders the words, "Since then it yet remains that some do enter." **They . . . entered not**—Since some enter, and yet the Israelites of Exodus failed, we find in this ninety-fifth Psalm another and a later **day** of probation, and possible **rest,** specified.

7. **He**—God by the psalmist. **Limiteth**—Defines, specifies, **a certain day. In David**—Delitzsch explains this as **by David.** For David does not here stand for the book of Psalms, but as name of the author of this ninety-fifth Psalm. **To day**—In our, David's, day. **After so long a time** as has elapsed since Israel's second generation entered Canaan, namely, a **time** of five hundred years. And even at this **day** there still remains a rest to those who **hear his voice,** but forfeited by those who **harden** their **hearts.**

8. And what **rest** is this? It is plain that this is not the **rest** which Joshua won for the survivors of the desert; **for** if Joshua (**Jesus** is here the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, who is really here meant, see note on Matt. i, 1) **had given** it, this **another day** would not have been spoken of five hundred years later than Joshua. A permanent **rest** of faith for all the faithful, other than the literal Canaan **rest,** is, therefore, a valid conclusion, stated next verse.

9. **Remaineth**—The full conclusion given. There is a permanent **rest** underlying the Canaan **rest,** which is God's and the believer's **rest.** But, significantly, our author for the word **rest,** which has hitherto been *ἀνάπαυσις*, a *pausing*, now substitutes *σαββατισμός*, *sabbatismos*, sabbatism, a sabbath-rest, thus finely identifying the saints' everlasting **rest** with God's

God. **10** For he that is entered into his rest, he also [g] hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his. **11** Let us labour there-

[g] John 19. 30; 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2.—[h] Chapter 3. 12, 18, 19.—[6] Or, *disobedience.*

fore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall [h] after the same example of [6] unbelief. **12** For the word of God *is* [i] quick, and pow-

[i] Isaiah 49. 2; Jeremiah 23. 29; 2 Corinthians 10. 4, 5; 1 Peter 1. 23.

sabbatic **rest.** On this Whitby gives a number of interesting extracts from the early Christian writers. "Irenæus saith, 'The seventh day, which was sanctified, and in which God rested from all his works, is the true sabbath of the just; in which they shall do no earthly labour.' And Origen saith, that 'Celsus understood not the mystery of the seventh day, and the rest of God, in which all that had done their work in six, and had left nothing undone which belonged to them, should feast with God, ascending to the vision of him, and in that to the general festivity of the just and blessed.' And again: 'If we further inquire which are the true sabbaths, we shall find that the observation of the true sabbath reaches beyond the world; the true sabbath, in which God will rest from all his works, being the world to come, when all grief, sorrow, and sighing shall fly away, and God shall be all in all.'"

And as the early Christian writers are thus in accord with our apostle, so our apostle is in accord with the Hebrew doctors, it not being easy to say which made the earlier utterance. Says Whitby: "Thus in their descants upon the 92d Psalm, which bears, both in the Hebrew and the Greek, this title, A Song of the Sabbath, (*εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ Σαββάτου,*) they say, 'This is the age to come which is all sabbath.' The psalmist,' saith R. Solomon Jarchi on the passage, 'speaks of the business of the world to come, which is all sabbath.' 'A psalm upon the sabbath day,' saith R. Eliezer, cap. xix, p. 42, 'that is, upon the day that is all sabbath and rest, in the life of the world to come.' And again, cap. xviii, p. 41, 'The blessed Lord created seven worlds, (that is, ages,) but one of them is all sabbath and rest in life eternal.' Where he refers to their common opinion, that the world should continue six thousand years, and then a perpetual sabbath should begin, typified by God's resting the seventh day and blessing it. So Bereschith Rabba, 'If we expound the seventh day of the seven thousand years, which is the world to come, the exposition is, and he blessed; because that in the seventh thousand all souls shall be bound in the bundle of life; for there shall be there the augmentation of the Holy Ghost, wherein we shall delight ourselves. And so our Rabbies, of blessed memory, have said in their commentaries, God blessed the seventh day; the Holy God blessed the world to come, which beginneth in the seven thousand of years.' Philo is very copious in this allegory, who, disputing against those who, having learned that the written laws were *συμβολα νοητῶν πραγματων, symbols of intellectual things,* did upon that account neglect them, saith that though the seventh day was a document of the power of God, and of this rest of the creature, yet was not the outward rest to be cast off."

10. Showing the true identity between God's **rest** and the believer's **rest.** Man is in God's image, and as God passed through his great week and then came to an ever-blessed repose, so man passes through his probationary work and goes to his eternal salvation.

11. **Therefore**—The doctrine of the divine **rest** has been stated; now for the solemn inference as to practice **Labour**—God laboured, so let us **labour. Unbelief**—Still the key-word; the fatal secret of Israel's **fall,** the fearful token of our **fall.**

12. **For**—The momentous reason for our taking warning, the character of the **word** by which our **unbelief** is searched out and we condemned. **Word of God**—The solemn **word,** in form of oath, which excludes from **rest.** Verse 3, and iii, 11. This divine

erful, and [k] sharper than any [l] two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and

[k] Proverbs 5. 4.—[l] Ephesians 6. 17; Revelation 1. 16; 2. 16.

word is terribly searching of spirit, soul, and body; searching whether that fatal **unbelief** lurks, the least particle, in any secret corner of our being. The many personal attributes here ascribed to the **word** has induced many eminent commentators, ancient and modern, to find here the **Word** of John i, 1, and to identify it with the second Person of the Trinity. The view of Delitzsch on this point seems most plausible—which is about this. The divine Word is the true expression of the divine nature, both as revealed *person* and as revealed *truth*. As the personal Word is the formative energy in the realm of physical things, so he is the actuating energy in the spiritual realm. He is the *soul of spiritual truth*, which from him derives its penetrative power upon and within the human soul. Hence, this description of the searching power of the word has a blending and identification of the person and the utterance, united in the term **Word.** And as the **Son,** by virtue of his being sent forth from the Father, is **Apostle,** and as the expression of the Father he is the Word, so this passage constitutes the climax of that terribleness of the administration of the **apostle** which calls for transition to the gracious High Priest, which follows in the next verse. This view is confirmed by a strong similar passage in Philo, of which this is a great improvement, and which we thus translate: "You may contemplate the uncomprehended God, cutting in succession all the natures of bodies and things, which seem to be compacted and unified, with the cleaver of all things, his Word, which, being sharpened to its keenest edge, (ακμη,) divides unceasingly all sensible things, and afterwards goes through, even to the atoms and the so-called indivisibles." **Quick**—That is, *living;* full of a pervading, searching life. **Powerful**—Intensely energetic in its search. **Sharper**—With an omniscient keenness of edge. **Two-edged sword**—Cutting either way, according as the presence of the element of **unbelief** may be. **Piercing**—Rather, with a personification, *going through;* for both this **word** and **sword** are *living.* It is not a **sword,** which is an instrument, but which is vital and self-active. **Even**—Expressive of the surprising extent to which the live **word** can penetrate. **Dividing asunder**—The question is raised by commentators, does this mean a separation of **soul** from **spirit,** and of **joints** from **marrow;** or does it mean that the **word** so subtly inserts itself into the interstices between, as we may say, the *particles* of these four entities as to separate particle from particle? The very fact that they are ranged in couplets seems to indicate that a separation between the two units of each couplet is meant. Yet the language of Philo seems to imply an interpenetration of the ultimate elements. And Lünemann and Alford find that meaning in the text. Says Alford: "The **word** pierces to the dividing, not of the **soul** from the **spirit,** but of the **soul** itself and of the **spirit** itself; the former being the lower portion of man's invisible part, which he has in common with the brutes, '*the irrational of the soul*' of Philo; the latter, the higher portion, receptive of the Spirit of God, '*the rational of the soul*' of the same; both which are pierced and divided by the sword of the Spirit, the word of God."

It is, of course, not meant that the **word** produces a literal separation of **the joints and marrow.** But these two parts are mentioned as the residences of mental operations; the former of *activities* and the latter of *sensations;* and it is between these mentalities that the **word** inserts its penetrative and divisive energy.

Discerner—Rendered by Alford "judger," as being derived from a word signifying to *judge.* It continues the personification expressed in *quick,* or *living,* and *going through;* im-

is [m] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. **13** [n] Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked [o] and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

14 Seeing then that we have [p] a great high priest, [q] that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of

m 1 Corinthians 14. 24, 25. — *n* Psalm 33. 13, 14; 90. 8; 139. 11, 12.

o Job 26. 6; 34. 21; Prov. 15. 11. — *p* Chap. 3. 1. — *q* Chap. 7. 26; 9. 12, 24.

plying a discerning power in the **word**. **Thoughts**—Thoughts in action, thinkings, trains of mental operations. **Intents**—Mental intentions, out of which spring volitions and actions. **Heart**—Note on Rom. x, 10.

13. Thus far is described the searching action of the **word** upon our inmost being; now is correspondently described the complete passive subjection of our being to the scrutiny of the same **word**. **Creature**—Of any nature, but especially human. From the fact that **sight** and **eyes** are affirmed, Lünemann, Alford, and Moll tell us that it is no longer the **word**, but God, that is described. But: 1. That forgets that nearly every term so far gives personality to this **word**. Living, energizing, going through, discerning, are its attributes. Now what are **sight** and **eyes** other than powers of discerning; powers which are attributed to the **word** in a very intense degree? 2. The **word** is the sole subject thus far, and it is a violation of grammar to suppose a change without an indication of change. 3. All the commentators we know overlook the correspondence above mentioned between verses 12 and 13. Verse 12 describes the active scrutiny of the **word** upon us; verse 13 antithetically describes our absolute nakedness beneath that same scrutiny, namely, of the **word**. **Opened**—The Greek word literally signifies *throated*. It is used of a wrestler *grasped by the throat*, and prostrated by his antagonist, and so Alford renders it, "prostrate." By Roman custom, a criminal's face and throat were exposed to public gaze by a dagger placed under his chin. But the real allusion is to the *exposure* of the *throat* of an animal to the knife of the slaughterer, produced by the drawing back of his head for that purpose. Hence the true meaning is, that we are as *exposed* to the view of the **word** as the victim's throat to the eye of his sacrificer. **Have to do**—Literal Greek, *him to whom is to us the word*. To this divine **word** there is incumbent upon us an answering human **word**. From this stern **apostle** and **word** turn we now to our gracious High-Priest.

III. The Son as our divine High Priest fully Contemplated, iv, 14–x, 18.

A. INTRODUCTORY, iv, 14–vi, 20.

1. Recurrence to former view (ii, 9–18) of our High Priest, 14–16.

14. **Seeing**—Joins on to ii, 18, and continues the description of the approachable sympathy of the suffering Saviour. **Then** — Or, *therefore*. In view of the stern nature of the divine legation (apostleship) of the Messiah. **Seeing** that this terrible **Word**—this adjudging King—is also a tender *Priest*, with all the saving power of royalty, **let us** not merely **fear** (iv, 1) and **labour**, (verse 11,) but **come boldly** for **mercy** and **grace**, (verse 16.) **A great high priest**—Greater than the highest sacred dignitary known to the Hebrews. **Great high priest** means a dignitary highest in the line of high priests. If our faltering "Hebrews" reverence that sacred line, most of all should they reverence Jesus. **Passed into**—Rather, **passed** *through;* namely, in his ascension to the right hand of God. See notes on Eph. iv, 8–10. The **great high priest** surpassed the ordinary line in this transcendent respect, that, whereas they only **passed** annually through the temple veil into the most holy, he **passed** through the **heavens** to the presence of God, of which the most holy was symbol. He was the real of which they were figure. **Jesus the Son of God**—Not Jesus (Joshua) *the son of Nun*, verse 8. **Profession**—Note, verse 1.

God, [r] let us hold fast *our* profession. **15** For [s] we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but [t] was in all points tempted like as *we are*," *yet* without sin. **16** [v] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

[r] Chap. 10. 23.—[s] Isa. 53. 3; chap. 2. 18.—[t] Luke 22. 28.—[u] 2 Cor. 5. 21; chap. 7. 26; 1 Pet. 2. 22; 1 John 3. 5.—[v] Eph. 2. 18; 3. 12; chap. 10. 19, 21, 22.

15. **For**—These next two verses extend and amplify ii, 17, 18, intending to show that the Saviour's humiliation, instead of being a ground of disgust, is truly most glorious and attractive, as being most tender. **In all points tempted**—How this could be, see our notes introductory to and on Matt. iv, 1. **Without sin**—Without a derived depravation from the fall, and so without a preferential tendency to sin; so that Satan could find "nothing in" him (John xiv, 30) as base for inducing apostasy. And yet, as human, possessing those susceptibilities which, pure and right in themselves, may, without the preventive will fixing itself firmly in obedience to the Right, be excited to sin. Hence with the full ability to **sin**, yet without the commission or guilt of **sin**. All the more glorious his merit, and all the more complete his example, because **sin** was possible, yet not committed.

16. **Therefore**—In view of this glorious tenderness of our **great high priest**. **Come boldly**—With free and confident utterance. **Throne**—Of God, to which we have access through him. **Mercy**—For our past sins. **Grace**—For future holiness. **Grace to help in time of need**—Literally, **grace** for timely (suited to the demand) aid; that is, against weakness and trial.

CHAPTER V.

2. Real qualities of high priesthood exhibited in Christ, 1-10.

1. **For**—St. Paul had introduced Jesus as high priest in iv, 14–16; he now

CHAPTER V.

FOR every high priest taken from among men [a] is ordained for men [b] in things *pertaining* to God, [c] that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: **2** [d] Who [1] can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that [e] he himself also is compassed with infirmity. **3** And [f] by

[a] Chap. 8. 3.—[b] Chap. 2. 17.—[c] Chap. 8. 3, 4; 9. 9; 10. 11; 11. 4.—[d] Chap. 2. 18; 4. 15.—[1] Or, *can reasonably bear with*.—[e] Chap. 7. 28.—[f] Lev. 4. 3; 9. 7; 16. 6, 15, 16, 17; chap. 7. 27.

proceeds to show what the qualities of a high priest are, (1–4,) and that those qualities belong pre-eminently to Christ, 5–10. **Every high priest**—In regard to the Jewish high priest consult our note, Matt. xxvi, 3. The meaning is, that being **taken from . . . men**, he acts **for men**; a man stands **for men** in sacerdotal duties toward **God**. **Gifts and sacrifices**—Strictly, **gifts** would be any presentation made to God, and **sacrifices** would be slain animals, but the two ideas fused into each other in practice.

2. **Who can have compassion**—The reason that the sinner should be represented by a man; the need of a humanly sympathizing representative. Priest and sinner should have a common ground. **Compassion**—A medium word, not signifying either deep passion or unfeelingness, but *considerateness*. **Ignorant**—Complete moral ignorance, from the first wholly involuntary, excuses guilt; but there is little of human moral ignorance which is not in some way guiltily incurred, and so is measurably responsible. Hence there were sins of ignorance, as well as sins of immediate knowledge, which needed atonement. **Out of the way**—Literally, *the wandering*, the knowing deviators from the true path, with no ignorance to plead. **Compassed with infirmity**—Susceptible to sin, and encircled with tempting excitements to his susceptibilities.

3. **By reason hereof**—That is, of this **infirmity**. **He ought . . . for himself to offer**—Although these susceptibilities are not in themselves **sins**,

reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. **4** [g] And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as [h] *was* Aaron. **5** [i] So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him,

[k] Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. **6** As he saith also in another *place*, [l] Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. **7** Who in the days of his flesh, when he had [m] offered up prayers and supplications [n] with strong crying and tears unto him

[g] 2 Chron. 26. 18; John 3. 27.—[h] Exod. 28. 1; Num. 16. 5; 1 Chron. 23. 13.—[i] John 8. 54.—[k] Psa. 2. 7; chap. 1. 5.

[l] Psa. 110. 4; chap. 7. 17, 21.—[m] Matt. 26. 39, 42, 44; Mark 14. 36; John 17. 1.—[n] Psa. 22. 1; Matt. 27. 46; Mark 15. 34.

yet so sure is the presumption that even the high priest has in course of the year incurred guilt that he needs to offer, also, **for himself.** Herein the true High Priest surpasses the Aaronic line, in that he is **without sin,** (iv, 15,) and needs not atonement.

4. **Taketh ... unto himself**—Whoso, like the sons of Korah or like King Uzziah, assumes the office without divine warrant, is a usurper. The rabbies say that "Moses said to Korah and his associates, 'If Aaron my brother took the priesthood to himself, you made insurrection against him rightly; but truly God gave it to him.'" **Called of God, as was Aaron**—Aaron, first in the long line of high priests, was elected by the divine Voice. Exod. xxviii, 1; xxix, 4; Lev. viii, 1, etc.; Num. iii, 10, and xvi–xviii. Until the time of Herod the line remained almost unbroken; but by him the office was unlawfully bestowed, and finally ceased just before the destruction of Jerusalem, after continuing through nearly sixteen centuries. Its divine perpetuity was fixed by our great High Priest.

5. **So also**—In 5–10 it is now shown that Christ fulfilled the outline of the high priest sketched in 1–4. First the writer shows that he fulfills verse 4, and thence moves backward to verse 1. First, Christ was no usurper. **Glorified not himself**—The glory of this divine office was shed upon him by his divine Father. **But he**—The nominative to **glorified** him understood. It was the divine Being who, in Psalm ii, 7, declared him **Son** and King, and who in Psalm cx, 4, pronounced him **Priest,** who conferred the honour of this high priesthood.

6. **After the order of Melchizedek**—Christ was no descendant of Aaron, and so could be no high priest in the hereditary Jewish line. High priest he can be only by an origination high, at least, as Aaron's own origination at first was. For this the inspired precedent is found in the most memorable words of Psa. cx, 4, (a psalm quoted as Messianic by the Messiah himself, Matt. xxii, 44,) where the Messiah is addressed by God as priest, not in the line of Aaron, but after the **order** of Melchizedek. And here first occurs the name of that primeval and typical priest-king, which figures largely in our author's future argument.

7 From the pinnacle of the Messiah's exaltation our author now descends at once to the scene of his deepest agony in the garden of Gethsemane. He shows, with touches of deep pathos, that the woes there endured were a filial suffering undergone to give him a complete fitness for conferring salvation upon all obedient to him. His purpose is to show that this deep descent is the source and condition of his subsequent ascent as exalted giver of salvation to us. **In the days of his flesh**—As he is now **in the days of his** resurrection glory, on the throne of his divine royalty. **Prayers ... supplications ... crying ... tears**—As profound in the depths of his sorrows then as exalted in the heights of his glory now. Evidently the scene of Gethsemane is here depicted, not with verbal quotation from either of the evangelists, but with something of the freshness of an original. It is not Luke here quoting himself, but Paul quoting what his attendant Luke narrates, and more. **Heard in that he feared**—A phrase ambiguous both in

[o] that was able to save him from death, and was heard [2] [p] in that he feared; **8** [q] Though he were a Son, yet learned he [r] obedience by the things which he suffered; **9** And [s] being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; **10** Called of God a high priest [t] after the order of Melchizedek.

11 Of whom [u] we have many things to say, and hard to be ut-

o Matt. 26. 53; Mark 14. 36.——2 Or, *for his piety.*——*p* Matt. 26. 37; Mark 14. 33; Luke 22. 43; John 12. 27.

q Chap. 3. 6.——*r* Phil. 2. 8.——*s* Chap. 2. 10; 11. 40.——*t* Verse 6; chap. 6. 20.——*u* John 16. 12; 2 Peter 3. 16.

the Greek and the English. It may mean that he was **heard** in regard to the point about which **he feared;** or that he was **heard** because he submissively and reverently **feared** as a Son. This last is the more probable meaning, inasmuch as the word is ordinarily used to signify a reverent and holy *fear.* But the statement that **he was heard,** indicates that the object for which he prayed was granted. It was not, indeed, granted if *fear* of physical death were the motive, and rescue from it the object for which he prayed. It was granted, if, as we think, he prayed for a divine support to buoy him up above a fearful breakdown under the forces bearing upon him, and which, but for that divine support, might have taken place. Then he was **heard,** and divine sustaining strength was granted him, impersonated in the consoling angel. See our notes, Matt. xxvi, 37–39. And by the **death** from which he was saved according to his prayer, we do not understand his mere bodily **death,** (from which, indeed, he was not saved,) but a fulness of woe at the depth and mystery of which his soul was "amazed." And this, too, was the "cup" which he prayed might so "pass" from him as that not only he might not drink it, in which sense it did not **pass from** him, but that he might not drink it to its bottomless depths, in which sense it did **pass from** him. In the bottomless depths of that **death** and of that "cup" were destruction to himself and failure of his work and of his future. And his prayer and perfect submission were the means by which, through divine strength imparted, he was saved from failure and won immortal victory.

8. The last touch that perfects the divinized man to be the Saviour of suffering men is, that he acquires experience from his own suffering. **Though . . . a Son**—And, therefore, we might suppose, above all suffering. **Learned he obedience . . . things . . . suffered**—Some of the ancient commentators were scandalized at this statement. "What! was he not obedient before he suffered?' Certainly, but not with a *suffering* obedience. It was an additional **obedience** he learned when he **suffered;** which he could not be conscious of, or exhibit as model to others, without the suffering. The old Greek writers abounded in various forms of the maxim that suffering is a source of wisdom. Trial is both the school and the test of virtue; not only proving, but creating, depth and power of character. The most tried saints on earth will be the highest saints in heaven: and he who will be Lord of them all will have been of all the deepest sufferer.

9. **Made perfect**—An incomplete Saviour would he have been without Gethsemane and the cross. And from this deep perfecting springs all his glory and power to save. **Obey him**—Mark the accord between his **obedience** in last verse and the **obey** in this. He was perfected by his **obedience** to God, they by their **obedience,** after the sure model, to **him.**

10. **Called** — Addressed, saluted; namely, by Jehovah, in the inspired Messianic Psalm cx. See notes on verse 6, and on vi, 20.

3. Parenthetic rebuke for dulness, and liability to apostasy; encouragement, 11-vi, 20.

11. **Of whom**—Our author, after Pauline fashion, suspends his discourse to make a digression, and will return to the point at vii, 1. The passage is in Paul's most severe and magisterial

tered, seeing ye are [v] dull of hearing. **12** For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* [w] the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of [x] milk, and not of strong meat. **13** For every one that useth milk [3] *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is [y] a babe. **14** But strong meat belongeth to them that are [4] of full age, *even* those who by reason [5] of use have their senses exercised [z] to discern both good and evil.

v Matt. 13. 15.——*w* Chap. 6. 1.——*x* 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2. ——3 Greek, *hath no experience.*——*y* 1 Cor. 13. 11; 14. 20, Eph. 4. 14; 1 Pet. 2. 2.

4 Or, *perfect;* 1 Cor. 2. 6; Eph. 4. 13; Phil. 3. 15.——5 Greek, *of a habit*, or, *perfection.* ——*z* Isa. 7. 15; 1 Cor. 2. 14.

style of rebuke; almost equal to 1 Cor. iv. 18–21. He charges the Hebrews with unappreciative slowness and infantile incapacity, (10–14;) he invites them, by God's permission, with himself, to leave the elements and go on to completeness, (vi, 1–3;) warning them, (4–8,) that for those who have heretofore fallen from a high spiritual Christianity, no repentance is possible. Changing, then, to a more cheering tone, he is persuaded that they are not of that apostate class, (9–12,) and lays before them God's oath-bound assurance that he will save the persevering believer, ending by bringing us back to where he began his admonishing digression, namely, at **Melchizedek,** 13–20.

Of whom — Concerning whom — namely, Melchizedek; but Melchizedek in his typical relations to Christ. **Hard to be uttered**—Rather, difficult for you to interpret when **uttered. Are** —Rather, *have become;* namely, under the influence of your aversion to the suffering Messiah. That error narrowed their views, so that the grand mysteries of the eternal priesthood were excluded. To hitch at a given error is to prevent all progress in truth and to render people **dull of hearing;** that is, torpid and slow in their receptive powers. The Greek word for **dull** seems to be compounded of ὠθέω, to move, with νη a prefix negative, and, therefore, signifies *immobile*, unmovable by the stirring truths of religion, and so unready to learn new truths, and to gain new Christian life and activity.

12. **For the time**—Since you were converted. It was about thirty years since the Jerusalem Church was reconstructed after the Sauline dispersion. The words here may refer to this period of the life of the entire Church, or to the length of the time since the individual conversions of those addressed. If they were not as old Christians as the "old disciple Mnason," (Acts xxi, 16,) who entertained Paul, still they were old enough to be beyond "spiritual babyhood." **Ought to be teachers**—For every Christian, however humble, if his heart and head be full of religion, may have occasion to be a *teacher.* **First principles**—The elementary letters, the A B C. **Oracles of God**—The revelations made in Christianity to men. St. Paul's own words in Rom. iii, 2, where see note. **Need of milk**—A humiliating representation of their childishness in spiritual truths. Similar is Paul's expression in 1 Cor. iii, 2.

13. **Every one that useth milk**—The **milk,** or *first principles*, are indicated by specimens, in vi, 1, 2. **Is a babe**—Spiritually ignorant and weak.

14. **Strong meat belongeth...full age** — The **strong meat** comes after vii, 1, and consists in starting from Melchizedek, and evolving the whole priesthood of Christ as based in the Old Testament, and superstructured in the New. **Good and evil**—In religious doctrine.

Here we may note that, 1. These *elements*, though depreciated in rank as compared with further and higher truths, are of the very first importance. They are to commencement of spiritual life what milk is to early bodily life. 2. Our apostle identifies advancement in Christian knowledge as one with advancement in Christian life. Low attainments in Christian knowl-

CHAPTER VI.

THEREFORE [a] leaving [1] the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance [b] from dead works, and

a Phil. 3. 12; chap. 5. 12.—1 Or, *the word of the beginning of Christ.*—*b* Chap. 9. 14.

edge, arising from want of interest in Christian truth, is one with a feeble, infantile Christian life. Deep interest in Christian verities, arising from their vivifying and controlling power, is identified with Christian vitality, integrity, and activity. 3. The apostle does not recognise, in the present passage, this **perfection** of Christian life as being attained at a spring. He does seem to presuppose that, ordinarily, powerful Christian character is progressively attained by study, experience, and growth.

CHAPTER VI.

1. **Therefore**—In view of their humble attainments portrayed in v, 11–14. **The principles**—Literally, *the beginning of Christ;* equivalent to **first principles** in v, 12. **Let us go on**—In the word **us** St. Paul identifies himself with his Hebrews, and moves for a common advance. See note on ii, 1. But, does he mean **go on** in this his present discourse; or **go on** in acquiring new accessions of Christian knowledge in addition to these **first principles**; or **go on** in increase of Christian life and power? All three. The unfolding of his grand views of the high priesthood of Christ in the future chapters, is one with the acquisition of new volumes of spiritual knowledge, and new forces of Christian character and power. It is the want of their taking this fulness of the atoning Christ into their mind and heart and life that renders them *babes,* v, 13. And when this text, **let us go on to perfection,** is adduced as an exhortation to advancing to a perfected Christian character, it is no misquotation. **Perfection** is here an antithesis to the babyhood of v, 13. It is the noun form of the Greek adjective rendered **of full age,** in v, 14, and signifies *adulthood.* **Not laying again the foundation**—A non-advancement is merely re-laying the elementary **foundation**; it is erecting no superstructure. Our apostle now enumerates six elements of which the **foundation** is composed, really arranged as three couplets in order. These were, probably, the elemental points of Christian doctrine anciently taught to the catechumen at his baptism. As a **foundation** they are important, nay, necessary to the superstructure, but very likely to be of no value without the superstructure. The three couplets are, *repentance* and *faith, baptism* and *imposition of hands, resurrection* and *judgment.* The first two are conditions to being Christian; the second are institutes in Christianity; the third are Christian doctrines of eschatology. As the Hebrews to whom St. Paul now writes were once Jews, they were educated upon a Jewish platform of the entire six elements, which had been reconstructed into the Christian view. We are not certain (though no commentator has suggested it) but that this re-laying the **foundation** meant a re-establishing in their own belief of the old Jewish view, and so relapsing from Christianity to Judaism. Certainly the staying on the **foundation** without advance would not be a *re-laying.* **Laying again** would be laying it over again, substituting the past for the present, the old Jewish for the new Christian one. **Foundation of**—That is, consisting **of. Repentance**—A mental *turning away* **from dead works,** that is, **works** which have no saving life in them, whether positive sins or an unsaving ritual. The Jewish platform would acknowledge only the former sense of the words; the Christian would emphasize the latter as against Judaism. **Faith toward** (literally, *upon*) **God**—The second element. Between the Jewish and Christian platform, the former would make **faith** upon **God** a blank monotheism; the latter would include **faith** *in Christ* as embraced in **faith** upon **God.**

of faith toward God, **2** [c]Of the doctrine of baptisms, [d]and of laying on of hands, [e]and of resurrection of the dead, [f]and of eternal

[c] Acts 19. 4, 5.—[d] Acts 8. 14-17; 19. 6.

[e] Acts 17. 31, 32.—[f] Acts 24. 25; Rom. 2. 16.

2. **Of—Foundation** is understood before this **of. The doctrine,** or teaching, is understood before each of the four **ofs** in the verse. **Baptisms**—Washings. The Greek word for Christian baptism is *baptisma*, this word is *baptismos*, and generically includes all ritual lustrations, *baptism* included. The plural here is used, not, as some think, to indicate trine immersion, (which was not a New Testament practice;) nor to include the baptism of water and of the Spirit; nor to imply the baptizing of many individuals; but because by Jewish **doctrine** there were many lustrations, while by Christian **doctrine** there is but one, namely, *baptism*. Closely coupled (by a conjunctive τε, which is a tighter connexion than και, *and*) with **baptisms** is the **laying on of hands.** The **laying on of hands** was, therefore, retained as distinctively a Christian institute, taught as Christian **doctrine.** Under the old dispensation it was a mode of blessing and of conferring office. Num. viii, 10; xxvii, 18, 23; Deut. xxxiv, 9. By it, under the new, the Holy Ghost was imparted after baptism, and office was conferred. Acts viii, 17; xix, 6; Acts vi, 6; xiii, 3; 1 Tim. iv, 14; v, 22. In regard to this last purpose it seems, from the New Testament and the practice of the primitive Church, that before the polity of the Church crystallized into form under the new effusion of the Spirit, a great variety of persons exercised their various gifts, (Eph. iv, 11, 12,) but that there gradually emerged three grades of ministry. And hence the episcopal form of government, initially represented by James at Jerusalem, by Timothy, and by Titus, being divinely sanctioned but not enjoined, became early prevalent in most Churches, and before the close of the second century universal in Christendom. The **laying on of hands** here, closely coupled with baptism, drawn from the original manual impartation of the sensible gift of the Holy Ghost, seems to have become an established institute, symbolizing that impartation of the Spirit by which the candidate was individualized as one in the individual body of Christ. Delitzsch maintains, with good show of argument, that the institute of imposition of hands has still a rightful place in the Christian Church, as the final recognition of that ultimate incorporation into the Church of which baptism is the initial sign. The **laying on of hands,** in its twofold use as confirmation of the people and as ordination of the ministry, indicates the one, yet twofold, priesthood of both ministry and people, each in its own order. Hoffman, as quoted by Delitzsch, suggests that *baptism* is correlated to the **judgment** as **laying on of hands** to the **resurrection.** But the close connexion in the Greek by a τε of the **resurrection** with the *imposition* indicates just the converse. Baptism more properly represents the resurrection, and so emblematizes us as the final, glorified, new creature; while the imposition symbolizes the final judgment which forever confirms us into the Church of the glorified. **Resurrection of the dead—Dead,** without the article, and plural, *deads*. It does not, therefore, positively express **the** universal **dead.** See our note on Luke xx, 35; 1 Corinthians xv, 12. Probably the resurrection of the righteous is really what St. Paul here intends. The resurrection of the wicked has no symbol in baptism. **Judgment**—Rather meaning the *sentence* than the *process* of judging; and the sentence is **eternal** in its force and effect, being irreversible and final. These six fundamental points of Christianity, in comparison with the Jewish **foundation,** are selected specimens, not an exhaustive enumeration. The Lord's supper, based on the passover, and the Christian Lord's day, based on the old sabbath, are omitted.

judgment. 3 And this will we do, [g] if God permit. 4 For [h] *it is*

[g] Acts 18. 21; 1 Cor. 4. 19.—[h] Matt. 12. 31, 32; chapter 10. 26; 2 Peter 2. 20, 21; 1 John 5. 16.

3. **And this**—The going **on to perfection. Will we do**—There is considerable authority for the reading, *this let us do.* **If God permit**—But why this **if?** Would not God, of course, **permit** so good a thing? Alford approves the interpretation that our apostle means here to imply that our so doing is not in our own power, but must be wrought in us by God. But for that meaning a mere **permit** would not be the true word, but *grant grace*, or *empower.* Delitzsch thinks that the implication is, that God may not **permit,** because they may be already in an irrecoverable, apostate state; but that is contradictory to ver. 9; and, besides, we cannot admit that this irrecoverability from apostasy arises from God's non-permission of recovery. St. Paul uses the very same words in 1 Cor. xvi, 7, an indication both of his being author of this epistle and of the meaning of the phrase, which is, **if God** in his providence **permit,** by continuing life, power, and opportunity to us.

4. **For**—What is the connexion? Does it mean we will press on, **for** *to stand still will produce apostasy*, and apostasy is irrecoverable? One would suppose that so essential an intermediate thought as this—that *standing still begets apostasy*—would have been expressed. Yet this seems to be the only alternative, unless we admit that an apostatizing resumption of Judaism is expressed in the *re-laying* of **the foundation,** as noted on verse 1.

This much-debated passage, being the central point in the extended discussion of these "Hebrews'" apostasy, in this epistle, we will endeavor to render to the English reader as literally as possible, thus: *For those that were once enlightened* (Greek aorist participle) *and tasted of the heavenly gift, and that became partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted both the good word of God and powers of the incoming dispensation, and that fell away, it is impossible again to renew unto repentance, re-crucifying* (as they are now doing, present participle here instead of aorist) *unto themselves the Son of God, and setting him forth as a public exhibition.* It is obvious on the face of an exact translation that the passage is describing *an existent class of cases.* The aorist, or historic tenses, show what experiences these cases have passed through; the present tense shows what they are now doing; and so persistently and flagrantly doing, that it is found *impossible to renew them again unto repentance.* It was, probably, the known occurrence of a notable desperate defection from Christianity at Jerusalem which awakened our apostle's fear for these Hebrew converts to whom he writes, and which he now portrays before their eyes to warn them of a like catastrophe and consequent obduracy. And this view is strengthened by the cheery persuasion expressed in verse 9, that his readers do not belong to that set of backsliders. The meaning, then, we take to be: Do not be re-laying the old Jewish platform, for you see how impossible it is to reclaim those who have thus Judaized. **It is impossible**—We cheerfully affirm, after Alford and Delitzsch, that there must be no lowering the legitimate meaning of the word **impossible.** But we just as positively affirm that there must be no overstraining the word above, or out of, its legitimate forces. There are, legitimately, various grades of impossibility, absolute and relative. A mathematical or arithmetical impossibility, and the impossibility for a contradiction to be true, are *absolute;* not to be overcome even by omnipotent force. And there is in the natural world such an impossibility as that the course of nature should change itself, which is intrinsically **impossible,** but possible to God. No one, we presume, would include such an impossibility in the present text. Then there are what are usually, but not very properly, styled *moral* impossibilities, namely, such as are found in the wills and conduct of free-agents. Such is the impossibility stated by our Saviour of a rich man's being saved. Delitzsch very inconsid-

impossible for those *i* who were once enlightened, and have tasted

i Chap. 10. 32.

erately says, in regard to that, "Even the explanation that what is altogether impossible with men may be effected by a special operation of divine power, is inadmissible here; for it is God himself who works through the preaching of the word." And is it not as truly God who works in the salvation of an apostate as of a rich man? The two cases are perfectly parallel. Christ affirms an impossibility, for the rich man to be saved: that is, on the human plane of possibilities; but it is possible with God. So, humanly speaking, there is also an impossibility for an apostate to be reclaimed; and yet that does not deny that it is divinely possible. Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man, and did enter the kingdom of God, so that the human impossibility was overcome. Nay, so have the tempers of men been in time worked upon, that we may believe that myriads and millions of rich men have entered the kingdom of God, that is, the impossible has become normally possible. Apostates whom it is impossible to recover, are, alas! matters of constant experience. Such have resisted and overcome the highest spiritual influences and forces; nothing more effective, normally, can be brought to bear upon them; and, therefore, in the normal order of things, they *cannot be reached.* Men who are not apostates, also, there are, all around us, whom it is humanly **impossible** to save. They have made up their minds, they scout all approaches of argument or conviction, they cannot be affected. God could by absolute power overrule them, but it is not best he should. They have freely placed themselves in that condition, and are themselves to blame. Now, as we have above said, the class of apostates at Jerusalem above portrayed was, probably, known to our author and his readers. Both knew how incorrigible and bitter they were, and that it was **impossible** to recover them. Nay, though it is not so strongly stated, many of these apostates may have so intrenched themselves in fixed determinations, self-interests, hostile arguments, and hatreds, as to *have become themselves unable* to break through those self-formed intrenchments; and thus it may have become volitionally **impossible** for them to choose return. Recovery may have become beyond the power of their own will. Just so, many rich and proudly intellectual men intrench themselves in fortifications against truth which they become unable to overthrow. And that inability is no excuse, because it is self-superinduced. They might as well be given up, and their case be used, as by our apostle, to warn others from falling into a similar obduracy. But it must be specially noted that it is not said of these Jerusalemite apostates that it was volitionally **impossible** for them, as free agents, to return **to repentance.** The declared impossibility is in the normal means to reclaim, not in the man's own subjective ability to repent. Such ability may in some, or all, cases have been lost, but it is not so said. And even if the Jerusalemite apostates were impossible to reclaim, this does not prove that all other apostates become **impossible** of recovery, any more than our Saviour's words prove it universally and forever **impossible** for a rich man to be saved. **Once enlightened**—The writer heaps clause upon clause, as Alford truly says, not only to show that the class he describes were truly regenerate, but to show what accumulated forces they must have had to neutralize in order to reach apostasy; forces than which none stronger can be normally used to bring them to recovery.

And so their recovery is **impossible.** These forces are now described in five clauses; two couplets with a single clause between. And the five clauses following portray the successive stages of Christian life. First couplet is a divine enlightenment and the heavenly boon of pardon and salvation; next, single clause, a permanent holiness of life; last couplet, the aggressive **word** and **powers** of Christian progress and triumph. **Once**—Not **once** for all, as

of [k]the heavenly gift, and [l]were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

[k] John 4. 10; 6. 32; Eph. 2. 8.

Alford, but **once,** as correlative to **again,** in verse 6. **Enlightened**—By the blended power of truth and the Spirit producing conviction and conversion. So Ephesians i, 18, "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened." After ye are *illuminated*, x, 32, where the same Greek word is used. This enlightenment at conversion was held by the earlier Christians to be so associated with baptism, as that *photisma*, the *enlightenment*, became a term for baptism. Yet the word so used did not assume that the enlightenment and the mere physical act of baptism were identical. So Chrysostom says, "The heretics have a *baptisma*, but not a *photisma;* they are baptized, indeed, in body, but are not enlightened in soul; just as Simon Magus was baptized, but not enlightened." The pretence that the word, as well as the entire five clauses, does not imply true conversion, is entirely inadmissible. **And have tasted of the heavenly gift**—Closely coupled by a τε with the former clause. And, evidently, **the heavenly gift,** immediately consequent upon conversion, is *salvation.* **Heavenly,** because from heaven, redolent of heaven, and tending to heaven. The **tasted** implies the sweet enjoyment of the assurance of that salvation by the witness of the Spirit. **Of**—The Greek genitive (not used after **tasted,** verse 5) implies the true universality of the **gift,** but **of** which the new convert tastes only his individual and initial *share.* **Partakers of the Holy Ghost**—A permanent sanctification in the Christian life following conversion. This forms the single clause between the couplets. **The Holy Ghost** is the general sanctifying gift of all saints; and of this gift these Hebrews had their share, and were **made partakers.**

5. The last couplet connecting the **word** and **the powers. Tasted**—Implying again the rich enjoyment; and here without the **of,** because this now grown Christian may **taste** and enjoy

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of [m]the

[l] Gal. 3. 2, 5; chap. 2. 4.—[m] Chap. 2. 5.

not a part but the whole **good word.** Excellent is Whitby's note on this **good word:** "So the promise of bringing the children of Israel into the land of Canaan is styled הדבר הדבר, *ῥῆμα καλὸν,* a good word, [English unliteral translation "thing,"] Joshua xxi, 45; xxiii, 15. The word of God for bringing his people out of captivity is styled, דברי הטוב, *my good word.* Jer. xxix, 10. The words of consolation which the angel spake to Jerusalem are, *ῥήματα καλὰ, good words.* Zech. i, 13. The promise made to God's people of remission of sins, and peace and truth in the days of the Messiah, is *a good word.* And the prophet, speaking of the Messiah, saith, My heart meditateth a good word. Psa. xlv, 1." The **good word** of our apostle here is, then, the *evangelium,* the *good message,* of the New Testament. A **word,** as spoken by the incarnate Son, (ii, 1, 2;) **good,** as revealing a heavenly Canaan, "glory, and honor, and immortality — eternal life." This blessed **word** this class had **tasted**—enjoyed its rich flavor in its full entirety. **Powers of the world to come**—Closely coupled with the **good word** of the New Testament are the **powers** of the new dispensation. Note on ii, 5. The **word** and the **powers** go together. These Hebrews had witnessed and enjoyed these **powers.** For the word **powers** (*δυνάμεις*) is often, in the Greek, put for *miracles* and *mighty* supernatural *works.* Matt. vii, 22; xi, 20, 21, 23; xiii, 54, 58; xiv, 2; Mark vi, 2, 5, 14; ix, 39; Luke x, 13; xix, 37; Acts ii, 22; viii, 13; xix, 11; 1 Cor. xii, 10; 2 Cor. xii, 12; Gal. iii, 5. An examination of these texts would show that the word is more frequently used for the supernaturalisms of Christ and the early Church in the upbuilding of Christianity than the English reader would imagine. Here it is used generically for every form of aggressive supernatural energy in the new dispensation. Of those in the apostolic age we seem to have a pretty full enu-

world to come, **6** If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; [n] seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God

[n] Chap. 10. 29.

meration in 1 Cor. xii, 10. As these sensible **powers** disappeared there still remained the normal spiritual **powers** blended with **the good word,** the ordinary aggressive *forces* of Christianity. These are the energies of the Spirit in quickening the soul, in the active conversion of men, in the building of the kingdom of Christ, and the gathering of the world within its dominion.

6. **If they shall fall away**—A sad mistranslation. There is no **if** in the original, and no future tense, and no contingent supposition. It is the "historic tense," and describes a **fall** that has already taken place, as our translation above indicates. **Fall away**—Of course they could not **fall** if they did not **once** *stand.* And that *stand* was a state of salvation in which, did they stand and not **fall,** they would have been safe. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." **Away,** means from the previous state of renewal in which the warning requires them to stand. It was not a **fall** from a state of condemnation, but from a state of salvation. And this **fall away** is the central thought of the whole epistle. To warn his readers *by the fatal example* of others is its entire purpose. See notes on iii, 7–iv, 13. **Renew them**—Bring them back to their once renewed, unfallen state. **Again**—Correlative with **once,** in verse 4. They were **once** renewed, but **it is impossible to renew them again.** There was a blessed **once** to which they can never be reclaimed **again.** And this very word **again** means they were once renewed. **Repentance**—The great, sure condition of salvation. **Seeing they**—Words not in the Greek, and which should not be in the English. See our translation on p. 78. **Crucify afresh**—Re-crucify, repeat the crucifixion. Their apostasy, as we have repeatedly intimated, arose from a disgust at the humiliation of the Messiah. Hence, "the hanged man" was the Jewish epithet for Jesus. Hence the apostatizing Hebrews were induced to represent Jesus **to themselves** in conception as a real impostor and malefactor. They approved his crucifixion, and thereby, in thought, recrucified him. The phrase **to themselves,** is, then, by no means, pleonastic, as it is often, as in the phrase "away *with yourself.*" The conceptual re-crucifixion within the imagination and heart has its outward antithesis in the **open shame,** the public exhibition. The Greek single word translated, **put him to an open shame,** *παραδειγματίζω,* is used in the Septuagint, Numbers xxv, 4: "Take all the heads of the people, and *hang them up* before the Lord against the sun." As counterpart to the subjective conceptual, crucifying **to themselves,** this word here seems to indicate some public exposure. This probability is strikingly illustrated in a chalked caricature belonging to the first century, lately discovered at Rome, in which the figure of a man with the head of an ass is suspended on a cross, with a reverent worshipper before him, and an inscription underneath, "Alexamenos worshipping his god." Perhaps the public exhibition by these apostates consisted in offering a public temple sacrifice, with open profession that it was an act of rejection of the true Sacrifice. It is true, the Pentecostal Church continued to attend the ordinary sacrifices in the temple, but there seems full indication (xiii, 10) that before this epistle was written a separation between the temple and the Church had now taken place. And such open self-commitment, with the attendant temper, self-interest, and exclusive association likely to follow, may account for the **impossible** of their being renewed **unto repentance.**

Those, however, who take the extreme view of this impossibility of recovery do not thereby weaken the argument of the possibility of apostasy. They only maintain a very fearful view of the nature of this apostasy. Note on x, 26. And even if this particular

afresh, and put *him* to an open shame. **7** For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them [2] by whom it is dressed, [o] receiveth blessing from God: **8** [p] But that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned. **9** But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and [q] things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. **10** [r] For [s] God *is* not unrighteous

2 Or, *for*.—*o* Psalm 65. 10.—*p* Isa. 5. 6.—*q* Isa. 57. 15; Acts 11. 18; 2 Cor. 7. 10.

r Prov. 14. 31; Matt. 10. 42; 25. 40; John 13 20 —*s* Rom. 3. 4; 2 Thess. 1. 6, 7.

set of apostates had apostatized irrecoverably, that irrecoverability is predicated of that set alone. Irrecoverability is not laid down as a universal law of apostasy.

7. The contrast between the persevering soul and the apostate is now pictured by two opposite soils. **Which drinketh**—Past tense, *drank*, as **bringeth forth** is present. The present fertility springs up from the past watering. **Drinketh** recognises the live character of the soil as figuring a living soul, a soul that **drinketh in** the water of life. **Cometh oft**—For *often* does the refreshing shower come upon the soul that readily **drinketh** it **in. Herbs**—Grass, corn, or any grain for man or beast. **By whom**—Rather, for or on account of **whom**; namely, the proprietors of the soil. But whom, then, do the labourers represent? Doubtless the teachers and rulers of the Church; as the proprietors are, as we may say, the owners of the soil, the soul. **Blessing**—The antithesis to **cursing** in verse 8; and in both sides of the double picture the words are delicately so selected as to apply both to the symbolizing soil and to the symbolized soul. **Blessing** on the fertile soil suggests the divine smile, shedding additional fertility, until it blooms into a paradise. And the beautiful colourings of the picture are easily transferred to the fertile soul.

8. **Beareth thorns**—Now, whatever it once bore. **Rejected**—*Reprobate;* the word again doubly applicable to soil and soul; *reprobate*, not by an eternal previous decree, but in consequence of its perverse products. **Nigh unto cursing**—Not sure of being restored again because it was *once* fertile. In both the **blessing** and **cursing** there seems allusion to the opposite terms in Genesis, i, 12, contrasting our primeval earth before and after the fall; "God saw that it was good;" and in iii, 17, "Cursed is the ground . . . thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth." **Nigh unto cursing** shows the downward course of the apostatizing soul, and its nearness to the fatal result. **End**—The finality of his earthly career. **To be burned**—Literally, *unto burning;* that is, after the career is closed. The terms are again skilfully double-sided, applying alike to soil and soul. Note that it is not the **thorns and briers** that are burned, for that would improve the soil, but the soil itself. There seems to be an allusion to Deut. xxix, 23: "The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and *burning* . . . like the overthrow of Sodom." And here is a closing period to the strain of most severe rebuke and solemn warning commencing at v, 11.

9. **But**—Passing to commendation and encouragement. At this point commences a gradual return, and, we might say, cheering *ascent* to Melchizedek, (verse 20,) from whom we abruptly parted at v, 10. **You** is here emphatic. Though there is a class of apostates, (as 4–8,) **you** are not embraced within it. **Better things**—Rather, *the* **better** of the two **things** contrasted in verses 7 and 8; namely, the perseverers and the apostates. **Thus speak**—In terms of almost contempt, in v, 1–vi, 2, and in terrible warnings, in 3–8. This rebuke and this warning are not the result of malign feeling, but of solicitude for those I love, and earnest hope that they will persevere to the end. But this is no assurance that others are not apostates, nor an infallible assurance that Paul's readers will not become so.

10. **For**—Grounds of this favour-

to forget [t]your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have [u]ministered to the saints, and do minister. **11** And we desire that [v]every one of you do show the same diligence [w]to the full assurance of hope unto the end: **12** That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience [x]inherit the promises.

t 1 Thess. 1. 3.——*u* Rom. 15. 25; 2 Cor. 8. 4; 9. 1, 12; 2 Tim. 1. 18.

v Chapter 3. 6, 14.——*w* Colossians 2. 2.——*x* Chapter 10. 36.

able hope. You have in some points done so well that God will afford you abundant enabling grace to persevere, if you use it. **Unrighteous**—The word must not, with Stuart, be softened to *unkind*. God holds himself righteously bound to grant more grace for grace well used. The man who does a measure of sincere duty may lay hold of God's righteousness as pledged to aid him, in accordance and without measure. And the writer goes on to show that God is pledged by both word and oath. **Forget**—Not *to be forgetful*, but to *consign to oblivion* by an instant act. **Work...love**—More authoritative reading, **labour** and **love.** Their **labour** was not **dead works,** (ver. 1,) but was animated with **love. His name**—For **God** holds your **labour** as done to himself. The **name** of God often stands, reverently, for God himself. Rom. xv, 9; Acts xix, 17; Matt. xii, 21. **Ministered to the saints**—Either to their own poor in Jerusalem, or to Christians visiting and sojourning there. Jerusalem was the Christian as well as Jewish metropolis, and crowds of Christians would visit it, especially on great festival days, needing hospitality. This rendered it desirable that the "poor saints" at Jerusalem should be aided by other churches. Note on Acts ii, 5. **Do minister**—You still persevere; and, while you do so, there is strong ground of hope. Your real danger is, that the popular contempt of Christ will shake your faith.

11. **We desire**—As God faithfully does his part, do you perseveringly do your part. **Every one**—It is a deeply *individual* matter. Each man must stand for himself or fall for himself. **Same diligence** touching **assurance of hope** that you have in *ministering* **to saints. Assurance of hope**—A glad **hope** of a glorious reward, with a full **assurance** in it. The writer has warned them by fear of fall, (4–6;) he now cheers them with a lofty view of the glory of perseverance. Thus, by the double action of fear, driving them from apostasy, and of hope, cheering them on to perseverance, he would incite them to *the* **better things** of ver. 9. **Unto the end**—For it is **the end,** the close of our career, that decides our case for eternity. All past *righteousnesses* (Ezek. xxxiii, 13) will not avail if **the end** finds us in an apostate condition. Alford whimsically tells us **the end** means the second advent, which they expected would take place in their own day. See note, Matt. xxiv, 13.

12. **Not slothful** in perseverance as they had been **dull** (same Greek word, v, 11) **of hearing. Followers**—Literally, *imitators;* "a favourite word of Paul's," says Alford. **Through faith and patience**—Equally persevering on their part as God is faithful on his part. **Who... inherit**—Universally, all who are faithful and thereby are heirs. For in this persevering faith we are imitators of the entire Church militant, and with it marching forward to join the Church triumphant. **The promises**—What **promises?** The entire volume of all the **promises** of grace and glory, to persevering faith made with increasing clearness through the advancing dispensations.

13-20. The basis of our assurance that perseverance will assuredly bring glory is the doubly-pledged veracity of God as covenanting and as binding himself by **oath.** But God neither swears nor promises that we shall persevere. He only promises and swears that there shall be no failure of the reward, *if we do*, through exerted grace and power derived from him, *persevere.* Note Rom. viii, 30. The reason why the old Jews were lost, was not because God did

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, [y] he sware by himself, **14** Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and [z] multiplying I will multiply thee. **15** And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. **16** For men verily swear by the greater: and [a] an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife. **17** Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto [b] the heirs of promise [c] the immutability of his counsel,

y Genesis 22. 16. 17; Psalm 105. 9; Luke 1. 73. —z Genesis 17. 2; Exodus 32. 13; Nehemiah 9. 23.—a Exodus 22. 11.—b Chapter 11. 9.—c Romans 11. 29.

not covenant and swear, but because they did not persevere, and make the covenant and oath binding.

13. **Promise to Abraham**—To illustrate that infinite **promise** of God to faith which insures to the militant Church its eternal triumph, our author, as in the Epistle to the Romans, goes back to the first great recorded exemplar in the patriarchal age, **Abraham. Could swear by no greater**—In a proper oath we **men** call a higher Being to witness our words and to be ready to punish our perjury. The true oath is a solemn calling of God himself to be that *witness* and avenger. But, by whom shall God **swear?** Only **by himself.** So God has to take upon **himself** a twofoldness. He **himself** must be both the *promiser* and *witness.* So the solemn words, Gen. xxii, 16, "By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, that in blessing I will bless thee," etc. And, Num. xiv, 21, "As truly as I live."

14. **Multiplying I will multiply thee**—By this **promise** Abraham is to be father of the Messianic race, including the Messiah, with all the blessing in the Messiah included, temporal and eternal. Says Stuart, "When Abraham was called by God out of Haran, and a promise of a numerous posterity made to him, he was seventy-five years old, Gen. xii, 1–4. Twenty-four years elapsed after this, while he was a sojourner in a strange land without any fixed place of abode, before the manner in which this promise would be fulfilled was revealed to him. Genesis xvii, 1–16. It was only when he was a hundred years old that the promised blessing of a son, from whom should spring a great nation, was obtained, Gen. xxi, 1–5. The preternatural birth of such a son was deemed by Abraham a sufficient pledge, on the part of God, that all which he had promised respecting him would be fulfilled. Gen. xxii, 15–18; Heb. xi, 8-12, 17–19; Rom. iv, 17–22."

15. **He had patiently endured**—The endurance was from him, the assurance of reward from God. **Obtained the** (fulfilment of the) **promise**—Namely, in the birth of Isaac. In Isaac, the Messiah and all the blessings the Messiah includes, were respectively embodied, as the oak in the acorn.

16. **An oath**—Greek, *the* **oath;** that is, *the* (institution of the) **oath.** *The* **oath** is a divine institution, the colloquial abuse of which is forbidden by Christ as profanity. So far is this from abolishing the true **oath,** which is an **end of all strife,** the Lord's purpose was to forbid its colloquial desecration in order to secure its solemn sanctity. So Philo says, "By an oath doubtful things are decided, infirm things are confirmed, and the untrusted receive trust." The ancient proverb is, "The man is the surety of the oath, not the oath of the man." So Philo says, "Men, when mistrusted, have recourse to the oath to gain credence for themselves; but God, when simply speaking, is worthy of belief, so that his word is no way different from an oath." And a sublime passage in the Talmud (quoted by Delitzsch) says, "Moses spoke before the Holy One: (blessed be He:) Lord of the world, hadst thou sworn to them by heaven and earth, I should have thought that as heaven and earth pass away, so, also, thine oath would pass away; but thou hast sworn to them by Thy great Name. It is so, then, that as Thy great Name liveth and endureth forever, Thine oath endureth forever also."

17. **Wherein**—*In which transaction;*

[3] confirmed *it* by an oath: **18** That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope [d] set before us: **19** Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, [e] and which entereth into that within the veil; **20** [f] Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, [g] made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

3 Greek, *interposed himself by an oath.* —*d* Chap. 12. 1.—*e* Lev. 16. 15; chap. 9. 7.—*f* Chap. 4. 14; 8. 1; 9. 24.

namely, with Abraham. **Confirmed it**—Greek, *mediated*, or interposed as a mediator in taking the oath. For the person sworn by is a middle man, a third intermediate person, between the parties. He is a high arbitrator solemnly called in between the two, empowered to witness and punish the perjurer. God, then, performs a double part; he is swearer and sworn by, party and mediator.

18. **Two immutable things**—His partyship and his mediatorship; his position as promiser and as juror. **Impossible for God to lie**—The whole foundation of the persevering believer's hope of glory is the absolutely bound veracity of God. **We... who have fled for refuge**—Greek, **we** *refugees.*

19. **Anchor... entereth**—Usually **an anchor** cast forth from a ship descends to the bottom, and there fastening, holds the ship firm. But of this ship of Christian faith the cable stretches *upward;* and the **anchor** fastens, not into the mud of the sea-bottom, but it enters **within the veil** that hides eternity from the earth, and firmly fastens itself upon the veracity of Jehovah. **The veil**—An allusion to the temple veil, behind which is the Holy of Holies; typifying the firmament, beyond which is the Presence of God. Note on 2 Cor. xii, 2.

20. Through the firmamental veil **Jesus** has penetrated even to the right-hand of God. Thither he has ascended as our **forerunner,** our pioneer, our goer-before; opening an ascending pathway through which we are to follow him. **For us**—In our behalf; assuring us that as he has **entered** so we shall enter. **Melchizedek**—Coming around from ch. v, 10 again to Melchizedek, who forms now the future subject.

CHAPTER VII.

FOR this [a] Melchizedek, king of [b] Salem, priest of [c] the most

g Chap. 3. 1; 5. 6, 10; 7. 17.—*a* Gen. 14. 18. *b* Psalm 76. 2.—*c* Psalm 57. 2, Dan. 4. 2; Mark 5. 7.

CHAPTER VII.

B. FULL UNFOLDING OF THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD, vii, 1–x, 18.

I. IT IS NOT LOCAL AND TRANSIENT, LIKE THE AARONIC, BUT UNIVERSAL AND PERPETUAL, LIKE THE MELCHIZEDEKIAN, 1–28.

1. **For**—Connecting with v, 10, after the intervening digression. See last note above. About **this Melchizedek** more puerile speculation has been written, extending from Hierax to Alford, than has been expended upon any human character in Scripture. Whenever we see an essay headed, "Who was Melchizedek?" we promptly direct our attention elsewhere. By successive speculators in different ages he has been conjectured to be the Holy Spirit; one of the *δυνάμεις*, or *powers* of God; the Logos; an angel; an antemundane man, created, not out of matter, but spirit; Enoch descended from heaven; Shem, Job, a great Unknown. Our opinion is, that Melchizedek was nobody but himself; himself as simply narrated in Genesis xiv, 18–20; in which narrative both David, in Psa. cx, and our author after him, find every point they specify in making him a king-priest, typical of the king-priesthood of Christ. Yet it is not in the person of Melchizedek alone, but in the grouping, also, of circumstances around and in his person, that the inspired imagination of the psalmist finds the shadowing points. Mel-

high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; **2** To whom also Abraham gave a tenth

chizedek, in Genesis, suddenly appears upon the historic stage, without antecedents or consequents. He is a king-priest not of Judaism, but of Gentilism universally. He appears an unlineal priest, without father, mother, or pedigree. He is preceded and succeeded by an everlasting silence, so as to present neither beginning nor end of life. And he is, as an historic picture, forever there divinely suspended, the very image of a perpetual king-priest. It is thus not in his actual unknown reality, but in the Scripture *presentation*, that the group of shadowings appears. It is by optical truth only, not by corporeal facts, that he becomes a picture, and with his surroundings a visible tableau, into which the psalmist first reads the conception of an adumbration of the eternal priesthood of the Messiah; and all our author does is to develop the particulars which are in mass presupposed by the psalmist. **King of Salem**—The celebrated Jewish traveller, Joseph Wolfe, "no mean authority on such a subject," is quoted by Mr. Grove, in Smith's Biblical Dictionary, as expressing the belief that **Salem**, signifying *peace*, is here not the name of a place but a part of Melchizedek's title. Mr. Wolfe had as a friend a sheik in the kingdom of Khiva, whose name was Abd-er-Rahman, signifying "Slave of the merciful God." He is also called Shahe-Adaalat, "King of Righteousness," the same as the Hebrew Melchizedek. "And when he makes peace between the kings he bears the title, 'Shahe-Soolkh,' king of peace, in Hebrew, Melek-Salem." But the best ancient Jewish authorities, the Targums and Josephus, agree that **Salem** here is an ancient name of Jerusalem. There are other Salems mentioned as competitors for this honour, but their claims are very slender. Wordsworth endeavours to identify Salem with Shechem, which was, indeed, a most memorable spot in patriarchal times, but he only shows a Salem *near* Shechem, yet not Shechem itself. Abraham was, at the time of meeting Melchizedek, returning from the region of Damascus to his home at Mamre, or Hebron, and would pass in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. In Psalm lxxvi, 2, "In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion," unquestionably gives the name of **Salem** to Jerusalem. This same Jerusalem, where dwelt the Hebrews to whom this epistle was addressed, was the dwelling-place of the type of our great High Priest, as afterward the chosen "dwelling-place" of Jehovah. Our Hebrews are on the spot, and can look back through the Antitype to his primeval type, the primitive "King of righteousness" and "peace." Wordsworth, indeed, objects that Jerusalem, being the special locality of the Hebrew theocracy, was not the proper place for a universal representative priest; but that is forgetting that Jerusalem was then not Hebrew but Gentile. As **king of Salem,** Melchizedek was, doubtless, an Amorite prince, and a descendant of Ham. Abraham was a lonely Shemite, who had but lately come into the country; a brother, yet a foreigner; a brave sheik with a goodly band of followers, and a predicted progenitor of a great people; but as yet he was entirely inferior to a settled **king** in the land, like Melchizedek. **Priest of the most high God**—A dignitary of high rank: both **king** and **priest,** worshipping the true God with acceptable rites before the apostasy of Ham had, in this region, established idolatry. **Blessed him**—The Shemite immigrant rejoiced in the benediction of the Amorite pontiff. He had well earned the benediction by his heroic expulsion of the invaders out of Palestine. **Priest...God**—In a tribe not yet apostate. **Most high**—Says Philo, "The Logos, who is shadowed forth by Melchizedek, is 'Priest of the Most High;' not as though there were other gods not most high, for God is as the One in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and there is none besides him."

part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; **3** Without fa-

[1] Greek, *without pedigree.*

ther, without mother,[1] without[d] descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth

[d] Exod. 6. 18, 20; 1 Chron. 6. 1, 3.

2. Tenth part of all—That is, **of all** the spoils he had taken. The tithes were, no doubt, a confession by Abraham of the priestly character of Melchizedek, offered as by a layman. It is a marked proof of the authenticity of this narrative that the father of Hebraism is described as doing sacred homage to the Hamite. **By interpretation**—That is, **interpretation** of his name Melchizedek, which signifies, in Hebrew, **king of righteousness. After that**—For **righteousness** precedes **peace**, as, without it, there can be no real **peace.**

3. **Without descent**—Without place in any priestly genealogical table, and so **without father, without mother,** as a priest, showing his unlikeness to, and superiority over, the Aaronic priest, and his likeness to Christ. The want of priestly genealogy, which is his unlikeness to the Jewish priests, is his likeness to Christ; who, being of the tribe of Judah, was, as to the priestly record, **without father, without mother.** Personally and humanly, Jesus had a mother, the blessed Virgin. **Neither beginning . . . nor end**—Some one has said, that when an infant dies it remains to the parent an infant forever. It never grows old, but is ever the same image of infancy. And so the image of this king-priest, as seen in the divine tableau, is not born, and never dies. The Aaronic priests are successively dying. A genealogical successor pushes his predecessor out of office and out of life. This priest has no genealogical successor or predecessor. He is thus the image of perpetuity, the type of the permanent priesthood of our Christ. **Made like unto**—The group of traits are seen to frame an image and likeness in shadow of **the Son of God. Abideth a priest continually**—One thousand years after this king-priest lived, the inspired psalmist contemplated the tableau, and there beheld him still, a **priest forever.** One thousand years later our writer looked, and there was the same, a **priest forever;** shadowy and only conceptual, indeed, yet the definite shadow of our great High Priest. Alford objects, that language so strong as "neither beginning of days nor end of life," is unsatisfactorily accounted for by the birth and life not being mentioned; he even styles this exposition "childish;" and he thinks there must be some mysterious literal fulfilment which he admits to be above explanation. But why are the name-types of verse 2 any less "childish?" We do not, wisely, require that the type should be a literal, but a shadowy, representation of its object. And, inevitably, any fulfilment, as demanded by Alford, would require two literal eternal high priests, which is entirely inadmissible. He further objects, that to make a transient appearance on the stage typical, would require us to make a type of Hobab, for instance. The reply is, that no such isolated trait could possess any typical significance. There must be a full assemblage of traits to form a definite typical image. The question may be raised, Whence did this grouping of shadowy traits into a significant image arise? Was it purposed by Providence in shaping the existence of the facts so as to form a type? Or did inspiration in Genesis purposely so narrate the facts? Or did the inspired imagination of the psalmist, seeing the facts as incidentally narrated, group them into form? These questions, interesting as they are, we leave a beautiful and sacred mystery. But we may note that in Genesis the passage of the tableau stands in a striking isolation. If a primitive pair of scissors had cut the passage out, we should not miss it, and should never imagine what a gem we had lost. We may easily concede, therefore, that it is placed and modelled there for this typical purpose.

a priest continually. **4** Now consider how great this man *was*, [e] unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. **5** And verily [f] they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment [g] to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: **6** But he whose [2] descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, [h] and blessed [i] him that had the promises. **7** And without all contradiction [k] the less is blessed

[e] Gen. 14. 20.—[f] Num. 18. 21, 26.—[g] Lev. 27. 30, 32, 33; Num. 18. 26; Neh. 13. 10.—[2] Or, *pedigree*.—[h] Gen. 14. 19.—[i] Rom. 4. 13; Gal. 3. 16.—[k] 1 Kings 8. 55; Luke 24. 50, 51; 2 Cor. 13. 14.

THE PARALLEL SUPERIORITIES OF MELCHIZEDEK AND CHRIST OVER AARON MAY BE REPRESENTED BY THE FOLLOWING TABULATION:—

Melchizedek.	Aaron.	Christ.
A priest-king.	Priest only.	Priest-king.
King of righteousness — of peace.	———	King of righteousness — of peace.
Universal.	Limited to Hebraism.	Universal.
Unlineal.	Lineal.	Unlineal.
Without beginning or end.	Beginning and ending.	Without beginning or end.
Without priestly ancestry or descent.	With father and mother.	Without priestly parentage.

But this superiority of Melchizedek to Abraham is not literal. The former has no such real importance as the latter in human history. His superiority is solely *within the tableau*. As indicated by **blessing** and **tithes,** it is theocratic; and so forms basis for a *typical* superiority. That is, Melchizedek is superior to Abraham only as a type of Christ. It is, therefore, good only for our author's argument.

4. **Patriarch**—Derived from *patria*, a tribe or lineal house or family, and *archē*, origin, founder. Abraham was the acknowledged founder of the Hebrew race. Hence great must Melchizedek be if greater than he. **Tenth**—Even among patriarchal peoples the custom of tithes, that is, of devoting **one tenth** of an income to religious purposes, had existence. Abraham performed sacrifices, and is called a **prophet, but nowhere a priest. Spoils**—The *spolia opima*, or chief and best spoils, selected for the leaders in the war.

According to our analysis, in 5–28 our writer makes *six successive points* showing **how great** the typical superiority of the Melchizedekian priesthood was over the Aaronic, the consequent permanence of the former as antityped in Christ, and its transcendency over the latter.

5–7. *First point.* The *lineal* Levites tithe the people—even though descendants of Abraham; but unlineal Melchizedek tithed and conferred blessing on Abraham himself.

5. **They . . . of the sons of Levi**—Especially Aaron's line, to whom, within the tribe of Levi, the priesthood was limited. **Receive**—By descent recorded in the genealogical table. **A commandment**—A special ordinance **according to,** and forming part of, **the** general **law. Take tithes . . . of their brethren,** of all Israelites. **Though**—Exalting the Levites as tithing sons of Abraham, in order to exalt Melchizedek still higher. The Levites, indeed, tithe the Israelites, **though** Abraham's sons; but Melchizedek, far greater, tithed Abraham himself.

6. **Descent is not counted**—*Unlineal* Melchizedek, in contrast with *lineal* Levites. **Received tithes**—As being pontiff, treating Abraham himself as Levites treat ordinary sons of Abraham. **Blessed him**—As a pontiff blesses his spiritual subjects. **Promises**—Note on vi, 12. This type of the Messiah is therein superior to the progenitor of Messiah.

7. **Less . . . of the better**—That is, in sacerdotal blessing, where the performer is assumed to stand as agent of God himself. Abraham, in accept-

of the better. **8** And here men that die receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, [l] of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. **9** And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, [m] paid tithes in Abraham. **10** For he was yet [n] in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him. **11** [o] If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? **12** For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity [p] a change also of the law. **13** For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. **14** For *it is* evident that [q] our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. **15** And it is yet

l Chap. 5. 6; 6. 20.—*m* Gen. 14. 20.—*n* Gen. 35. 11; 1 Kings 8. 19.—*o* Gal. 2. 21; ver. 18, 19; chap. 8. 7.

p Isa. 66. 21; Jer. 31. 31, 34; Ezek. 16. 61; Acts 6. 13, 14.—*q* Isa. 11. 1; Matt. 1. 3; Luke 3. 33; Rom. 1. 3; Rev. 5. 5.

ing the blessing, therein acknowledged himself the inferior of Melchizedek.

8. *Point second.* **Here,** under Mosaic law, the priests that tithe are only life-long; **there,** under patriarchal law, there is a perpetual priest.

Here—Under the law of Moses. Those who **receive tithes** are **men that die;** and so their priesthood is but life-long. The priest dies with the man, and a new priest succeeds. **But there**—In Genesis and in Psalm cx. **Witnessed**—By the testimony of the inspired psalmist. **He liveth**—This priest "never dies," as truly as the king "never dies," though for a different reason. The king, conceptually, never dies, because he lives in his successor; this priest, conceptually, never dies, because he stands forever without a successor. Alford objects that the **die** of the Levitical priest is personal, and, therefore, the **never die** of Melchizedek must be personal, and so he must be, mysteriously but literally, still living. But the **die** of the priest was not only personal but official; the priest died with the man. And it is the official death at the personal death that is here the point.

9, 10. *Point third.* Levi himself, in the loins of Abraham, conceptually paid tithes to Melchizedek, and so Melchizedek is superior to the whole Aaronic line.

9. **May so say**—Indicating that he must be understood to speak, not literally nor physically, but conceptually. Levi had no literal existence with or in Abraham. He could not be, literally, responsible for Abraham's act, nor chargeable with any crime of his. Notes on Rom. v, 12, and Eph. ii, 3. Yet, by the natural law of descent, the founder of a race usually fixes the condition and rank of the race. Aaron and all his descendants acknowledged their inferiority to their great founder, Abraham. And hence, when Abraham performed this act, so typical of the future, he humbled all his race, save one, before this **priest forever.** That one was Christ, who had no Abrahamic father, and whose divine descent placed him above the Abrahamic line.

11–19. *Point fourth.* The *declaration of the psalmist,* affirming another **order** of priesthood than the Levitical: also a change of the law of descent, and showing that one order, the Levitical, is transient, and the other, Melchizedekian, is supreme and permanent.

11. **If** the Levitical priesthood was not defective, **what need** of **another order,** as predicted by the psalmist?

12. A change of **the priesthood** so predicted necessitated **a change also of the law** of succession, limiting it no longer to the tribe of Levi.

13. And this accords with fact. **For he**—Christ. **These things**—In the psalmist. **Another tribe**—Than Levi. **No man . . . altar**—Discharged priestly functions.

15. **And it**—The transfer of the priesthood from Levi. **For**—The reason that, according to the psalmist, there is a new **order.**

far more evident: for that [r]after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, **16** Who is made, not after the [s]law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. **17** For he testifieth, [t]Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. **18** For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for [u]the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. **19** For [v]the law made nothing perfect, [3]but the bringing in of [w]a better hope *did;* by the which [x]we draw nigh unto God. **20** And inasmuch as not without an oath *he was made priest:* **21** (For those priests were made [4]without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, [y]The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek:) **22** By so much [z]was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. **23** And they truly [a]were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: **24** But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath [5]an unchangeable priesthood. **25** Wherefore he is able also to

r Psa. 110. 4.—*s* Gal. 4. 3, 9; Col. 2. 14, 20.—*t* Psa. 110. 4; chap. 5. 6, 10; 6. 20.—*u* Rom. 8. 3; Gal. 4. 9.—*v* Acts 13. 39; Rom. 3. 20, 21, 28; 8. 3; Gal. 2. 16; chap. 9. 9.—3 Or, *but* it was *the bringing in*, Gal. 3. 24.

w Chap. 6. 18; 8. 6.—*x* Rom. 5. 2; Eph. 2. 18; 3. 12; chap. 4. 16; 10. 19.—4 Or, *without swearing of an oath.*—*y* Psa. 110. 4.—*z* Chap. 8. 6; 9. 15; 12. 24.—*a* Neh. 12. 10, 11.—5 Or, *which passeth not from one to another.*

16. **A carnal**—Or *fleshly;* that is, feeble and transitory, as all *flesh* is: in antithesis with **endless.** The only vitality of the former priesthood was the force of a positive but transient enactment; but the vitality animating the new priesthood is **the power of an endless,** immortal, **life.** Immortal **life** is in the priest, in his priesthood, and in all who are redeemed by its power. **Endless**—Literally, indissoluble **life,** not to be dissolved or fused away into space or ether.

17. **He**—The psalmist, or the Spirit that inspired him. **Testifieth**—Upon the testimony of this psalm our author grounds himself by repeated quotations as impregnably sustaining all his positions. This testimony involves in itself all the particulars he evolves from it. It is the middle point between him and the Melchizedekian passage in Genesis.

18. **The commandment** — Which established the Aaronic priesthood. **Weakness** — Incapacity in itself to complete our pardon and salvation.

19. **Law made nothing perfect**—Explaining the **weakness** of the previous verse. The law, without the efficacy of Christ's atonement, only shadowed pardon and life, but could not effectuate them. **A better hope**—Based upon the expiation shadowed by the old ritual, but accomplished by the real sacrifice on the cross. **We draw nigh**—Through a real high priest and mediator.

20–22. *Point fifth.* The high priesthood forever was inaugurated by an oath, the Levitical not.

20. **Not without an oath**—Christ's high priesthood, as the highest and surest inauguration, the **oath** of God. Note on vi. 13.

21. **Without an oath**—By Moses, through God's direction, with no **oath** of permanence. **The Lord sware**—Our author, by inspired authority, reads into these words a perpetuity, an eternity, more fixed than any ritual.

22. **By so much**—By the measure of the unmeasurable veracity of God. **Better testament**—Covenant or dispensation.

23–28. *Point sixth.* An undying priest and priesthood, able to save to the uttermost, is just suitable for us sinners.

23. **Many priests . . . by . . . death**—Poor mortals, alas! can send a line of life through centuries only by a succession of living and dying men.

24. **This man**—Extends his own line of unbroken individual life through ages, into and throughout eternity.

25. **Wherefore**—By his unchanging, undying priesthood. **Able also to save**—Through his ever-availing expiation. **To the uttermost**—To the full

save them [6] to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth [b] to make intercession for them. **26** For such a high priest became us, [c] *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, [d] and made higher than the heavens; **27** Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, [e] first for his own sins, [f] and then for the people's: for [g] this he did once, when he offered up himself. **28** For the law maketh [h] men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, [i] who is [7] consecrated for evermore.

6 Or *even or.*—*b* Rom. 8. 34; 1 Tim. 2. 5; chap. 9. 24; 1 John 2. 1.—*c* Chap. 4. 15.—*d* Eph. 1. 20; 4. 10; chap. 8. 1.—*e* Lev. 9. 7; 16. 6, 11; chap. 5. 3; 9. 7.

f Lev. 16. 15.—*g* Rom. 6. 10; chap. 9. 12, 28; 10. 12.—*h* Chap. 5. 1, 2.—*i* Chap. 2. 10; 5. 9.—7 Greek, *perfected.*—*a* Eph. 1. 20; Col. 3. 1; chap. 1. 3; 10. 12; 12. 2.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOW of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such a high priest, [a] who is set on the right hand of the throne

est completion. **Them . . . that come**—The solemn condition of this salvation. The very **uttermost** does not reach those who refuse to **come.** Nay, the fuller the salvation the deeper the damnation. **Ever liveth**—Though he died he still lives. **Intercession**—By ever presenting the merits of his sacrifice. Note on Rom. viii, 24.

26. **Such a high priest became us**—Is he not, in the power of his sacrifice and the perpetuity of his intercession, just the **high priest** we human sinners need? **Holy . . . sinners**—A beautiful delineation of the sinlessness of Jesus, an ideal so perfectly maintained throughout the New Testament. It was an ideal above the powers of the writers or of the age to fabricate. It was impressed upon the mind of the Church, in the fulness of its beauty, by the living, divine Reality himself. Thus perfect it **became** him to be, as our ultimate model; but here, especially, it is commemorated as the condition of the perfectness of his expiation, as shown next verse. **Higher than the heavens**—Note on Eph. iv, 10. However perfect his human character, it would not avail could he not appear in heaven for us.

27. **First for his own sins**—Sinlessness is the necessary condition of a perfect atonement. One sinner cannot efficiently die for another sinner; for he deserves that death for his own sin. **Once**—And not **daily.** The Romish pretence that the **daily** mass is a real sacrifice is here contradicted. The divine victim can never be offered but **once.**

28. **The** Mosaic **law**—In antithesis with **the** psalmist's **word,** or expression **of the oath** inaugurating the perpetual High Priest. Notes on verses 20 and 21. **Since the law**—For the psalm is later than the Pentateuch, and unfolds the later revelation of God's purposes. **The Son**—Of Heb. i, 1. It stands in antithesis with **men . . . which have infirmity.** The divine **Son** has no **infirmity.** He is unmarred by sin. **Consecrated**—Rather, *perfected,* absolutely *completed,* as the Model, Expiator, and Saviour.

CHAPTER VIII.

II. Our ascended High Priest: introducing the true reality in place of shadows; and substituting for an old and inferior, a new and superior, dispensation, 1–13.

Verses 1–6 portray the real and divine High Priest as having gloriously ascended to the upper **tabernacle**—the true and heavenly; verses 7–13 portray the glory of the consequent **new covenant,** by him inaugurated, in comparison with the **old.**

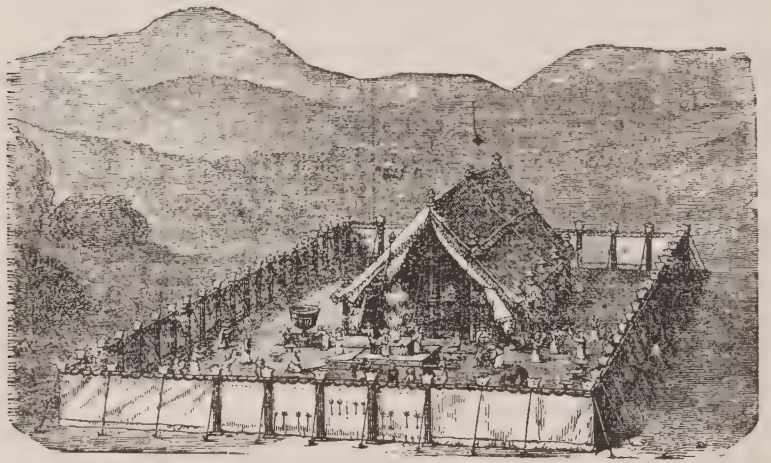
1. **The sum**—The main point, the outcome of the above view of the eternal priesthood, is **this. Such a high priest**—The strength of our argument lies in the greatness and glory of our **high priest** in his exalted session **in the heavens. Set**—Took seat. The earthly **high priest** reverently stood, and *stood* but for a moment, in pres-

of the Majesty in the heavens; **2** A minister [1] of [b] the sanctuary, and of [c] the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. **3** For [d] every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore [e] *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. **4** For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that

1 Or, *of holy things.*—*b* Chap. 9. 8, 12, 24.—*c* Ch. 9. 11.—*d* Ch. 5. 1.—*e* Eph. 5. 2; ch. 9. 14.

ence of God in the holy of holies. But this, our **high priest,** sits a divine **priest** in the heavens.

2. **A minister**—A performer of sacred rites. **The sanctuary**—Literally, *the holy places,* namely, in the tabernacle or temple. **The true tabernacle**—The *genuine,* real **tabernacle,** of which the earthly **tabernacle** is but a **shadow,** a copy after a **pattern** in the skies, verse 5. **Pitched**—A **tabernacle** is simply a *tent;* and the Greek word for **pitched** is *fastened together;* designating the fastening of the different parts so as to form or construct the tent. Our word, to *pitch,* rather refers to fixing or pitching upon the spot and placing the tent there. Hence the Greek term describes, more beautifully than does the English, the *formation* or building by divine power of the heavenly **tabernacle. Not man**—Who built, indeed, the earthly, but not the heavenly, **tabernacle.**



WILDERNESS TABERNACLE.

3. **For**—To show the true reality, nay, the sole reality, of Christ's high priesthood, of which the earthly high priesthood is a shadow. That completeness consisted in the fact that he had a divine **somewhat . . . to offer,** a point slightly opened here, and completely developed at ix, 26, x, 5–17.

4. **For**—It is as yet an unexplained **somewhat;** for so entirely is this **high priest** out of the order of earthly **high priests,** that, **if he were on earth,** (**were** being here emphatic,) he would **not be a priest** at all. Our writer seems about to explain this **somewhat,** but the current of his thought is veered (after the Paulino style, note on Eph. iii, 1, 14) by a view opening upon him of Christ's elevation to the mediatorship of the **new covenant,** and he defers considering the **somewhat . . . to offer** to x, 5–17. **Priests . . . law**—The priesthood on **earth** are a regular line, offering **gifts,** and by regular **law.** And in this line, and with these **gifts,** and according to this **law,** Christ would be no **priest.** For he was not descended from Levi; he never performed any sacrifices, and the **law** forbade him to be a **priest**

[2] there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: **5** Who serve unto the example and [f] shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: [g] for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.

2 Or, *they are priests.*—*f* Col. 2. 17; chap. 9. 23; 10. 1.—*g* Exod. 25. 40; 26. 30; 27. 8; Num. 8. 4; Acts 7. 44.—*h* 2 Cor. 3. 6, 8, 9; chap. 7. 22.—3 Or, *testament.*—*i* Chap. 7. 11, 18.

6 But now [h] hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better [3] covenant, which was established upon better promises. **7** [i] For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. **8** For finding fault with them,

Yet the Being who on earth gazed upon the offerers of sacrifice, unadmitted to perform the rite, was sole original of all—was both sole priest and victim.

5. And, curiously enough, this whole order of priests and tabernacle are but a copy on earth of this true priest, who is no **priest on earth,** but really sole, real, original **priest,** whether **on earth** or **in the heavens. Unto**—For. The earthly and the heavenly tabernacle correspond to each other. Moses was *shown* **the pattern . . . in the mount.** Exod. xxv, 9, 40; Acts vii, 44. Not that the eye of Moses was so enlarged in its scope of vision as to see the vast, original heavens. But such a **pattern** was exhibited as enabled the mind of Moses to construct a material frame to symbolize its nature.

That the sanctuary below was but a small model of the glorious sanctuary in the heavens is the doctrine of this and the following chapters, as of other scriptures. So even the earthly Jerusalem was type of a heavenly Jerusalem above. See note on Gal. iv, 26. While below are the earthly sanctuary, ritual, and priesthood, above are the **true tabernacle,** the **heavenly things,** and the **high priest on the right hand of God.** See our note on ix, 1.

6. **But**—In contrast to his being **on earth not a priest,** he has in heaven **a** divine **ministry,** therefore **a more excellent.** Not that he performs a sacrifice in heaven; but presents himself in heaven as the historical sacrifice once offered, whose merit forever avails in behalf of those for whom its efficacy has been pledged. And from that high standpoint he has power as **mediator,** or middle being, to change the dispensation and bring in **a better covenant.** And here our Hebrews may see to what a height the very sufferings of the despised Messiah exalt him; and from what a transcendent height the **better covenant** is brought in. **Established**—Literally, *legislated,* constituted by law. **Better promises**—Because clearer, fuller of heaven, and more truly based upon a past atonement than the promises of vi, 12, where see note.

And now the **new covenant** will be portrayed as superior, *first,* in its greater holiness, (7–10,) and, *second,* in its ultimate universal diffusion of divine knowledge and mercy, 11–13.

7. **That first covenant,** however the Hebrews may honour and cling to it, was by its own Old Testament prophetic confession a defective one. **No place,** or room, would have been recognised for a **second,** if the **first** had been **faultless.**

8. **For**—To quote the proof. **Finding fault with them—Them,** like **their,** in verse 9, refers to the people under the first **covenant** as morally faulty under it, and needing **a new.** He (God, whose the words are) **saith.** In Jer. xxxi, 31–34. Delitzsch thus describes the sad crisis in which these predictions were, originally, by the prophet uttered: "After the sack of Jerusalem, Jeremiah, with the other captives, was brought in chains to Rama, where Nebuzaradan had his headquarters. Then took place, at God's special command, his prophecies of the future entire restoration of Israel, of another David, of Rachel's wailing over her children at Rama, and their future return; of the new covenant, resting on absolute and ver-

he saith, [k] Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: **9** Not according to [l] the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. **10** For [m] this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will

k Jeremiah 31. 31-34. — *l* Exodus 24. 3, 11; Deut. 5. 23; Gal. 3. 15, 19. — *m* Chap. 10. 16.

itable forgiveness of sins, which Jehovah would make with his people; these prophecies forming the third part of the three great triologies into which the prophecies of Jeremiah may be divided: chap. 21–25, the book against the shepherds of the people; chap. 26–29, the book of Jeremiah's conflict against the false prophets; chap. 30, 31, the book of restoration." **Behold, the days come**—We have here presented, in the words of the prophet, a picture of the glories of the Messianic age. The future lies in mass before the prophet; but he discerns only the radiant points of the Christian ages, the darker back grounds being invisible to his view. This luminous picture is presented before Israel in a dark hour of her history to cheer her hope for a nobler future. **Israel and . . . Judah,** the two kingdoms, once one under David and Solomon, now divided. The former was carried into captivity first of the two.

9. **Not . . . covenant . . . fathers**—Positively, as last verse, it was to be **a new covenant;** negatively, it was not to be the **old** one continued and amended: it was to be a substitution, not an improvement merely. The old covenant was to cease existence, and a new one take its place. And, lest the words might seem to signify some minor change, a full specification of the old covenant is given. It was that covenant made when God led Israel **out of. . .Egypt,** namely, the Mosaic covenant. A change no less than an abolition of the Mosaic and an establishment of a new Messianic covenant, was to take place. **Because**—Important reason given: the failure of Israel (not of God) to keep the covenant. **They continued not,** then **I regarded them not.**

10. **With the house of Israel**—**The new covenant** was truly made by Christ **with** (or rather *to*, as the Greek word signifies) **the** literal **house of Israel,** as the Hebrew readers of this epistle knew, and had accepted it. Yet only a remnant for the time, and until this time, accepted, and were by it saved. The Gentiles accepted, and are gathered in within the limits of this **house of Israel;** and it is within the limits of this **covenant** that the literal Israel shall be gathered into the fold of Christ. Here St. Paul's statement in Romans xi, 1–32 should be most deliberately read. It will then be seen that Israel's restoration is not a national return to Palestine, but a universal, yet individual, restoration to the **covenant** under Christ. **After those days**—The **days** or period of the Mosaic covenant, covering several centuries. The student of prophecy should here carefully note the comprehensive use of the word **days,** to signify great periods and dispensations of time. So in the words, verse 8. And it should be also noted, that these **days** of centuries positively contradict the notion that Christ's second advent was expected by the inspired writers to take place in the apostolic age. On the contrary, these centurial **days** measured out a new probational dispensation—a new *æon*, or age. In that age are we; and the complete fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy is yet in prospect before the second advent; that is, the second advent is not *pre-* but *post-millennial.* **Write them in their hearts**—They shall no more be recorded on the insensate stone, to be observed with a mechanical obedience. There shall be a quickened conscience, a clearer knowledge, and a bounding readiness of heart to obey

[4] put my laws into their mind, and write them [5] in their hearts; and [n] I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: **11** And [o] they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. **12** For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, [p] and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. **13** [q] In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.

4 Gr., *give.*—5 Or, *upon.*—*n* Zech. 8. 8.—*o* Isa. 54. 13; John 6. 45; 1 John 2. 27.—*p* Rom. 11. 27; chap. 10. 17.—*q* 2 Cor. 5. 17.

CHAPTER IX.

THEN verily the first *covenant* had also [1] ordinances of divine service, and [a] a worldly sanctuary. **2** [b] For there was a tabernacle

1 Or, *ceremonies.*—*a* Exod. 25. 8.—*b* Exod. 26. 1.

the holy law. **To them a God**—With no false god intervening.

11. The universality of this abounding piety comes last and latest—the consummation of the glories of this Messianic dispensation. Holy instruction shall not be given by slow, individual effort; but in masses the light of truth shall be universal as the light of day. **Know the Lord**—That is, **know** Jehovah to be the true God, against all idols and against all atheism; for idolatry and atheism will disappear. **All**—Nothing less than **all** Jews and **all** Gentiles. **Least . . . greatest**—Without distinction of rank, caste, colour, or nationality.

12. **Merciful**—In consequence of the existing spirit of permanent obedience, and of penitence for **unrighteousness** or short comings. There will be a level of piety unknown to the olden time, by which God's *mercies* will be an ever-flowing stream. **Their sins** of the former time will be **no more** a reason for penalty.

13. And now comes the clear conclusion for the Hebrew readers of this epistle. The very terms of the prophecy describe the abolition of obsolete Judaism, and assure them that to apostatize from Christ is to relapse into a vanished dispensation. **A new covenant** pronounces the former to be **old** and obsolete. **Decayeth**—As, plainly, Judaism is doing. **Vanish away**—As Judaism slowly but surely must. The Jews still exist as a separate people; living in the cold moonlight of essential deism. The warm beams of the sun will, in its own day, rise upon them, inspiring them with a new life and flooding them with the latter-day glory.

CHAPTER IX.

2. High Priesthood of Christ Antitypical, 1-28.

The old covenant ritual was type of the new covenant events. The entrance of the Jewish high priest, on the great day of atonement, from the holy place through the second veil into the holy of holies, with a blood offering, was type of the ascension of our great High Priest from the earth through the firmamental heaven into the highest heaven with the offering of his own blood, for our eternal redemption.

a. *The (twofold) tabernacle, with its gorgeous furniture, and its priestly and high priestly ritual, was without worth but as a type,* 1-10.

1. **Then verily the first covenant**—The word **covenant**, as the Italics show, is not in the Greek, but is rightly supplied by our translators from the last chapter. **Had**—As the tabernacle was first constituted by Moses. **Ordinances**—Literally, (Greek,) *justifications;* that is, arrangements *justified* by the divine will. **Worldly sanctuary**—That is, an *earthly*, in contrast with the true and heavenly **sanctuary** of which this was type; namely, the **greater and more perfect tabernacle** of verse 11, the **holy place** of verse 12, and the **heaven itself** into which **Christ is entered** of verse 24. Indeed, in this last verse both sides of the antithesis are given, namely, **the holy places made with hands**, and **the heaven itself.** See note on viii, 5.

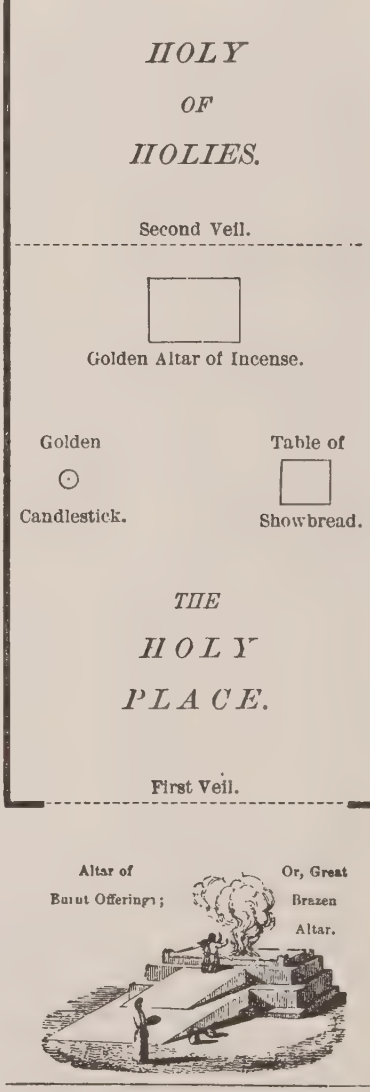
2. **A tabernacle**—Or *tent*, yet a dif-

made; the first, [c] wherein *was* [d] the candlestick, and [e] the table, and

[c] Exod. 26. 35; 40. 4.—[d] Exod. 25. 31.

[e] Exod. 25. 23, 30; Lev. 24. 5, 6.

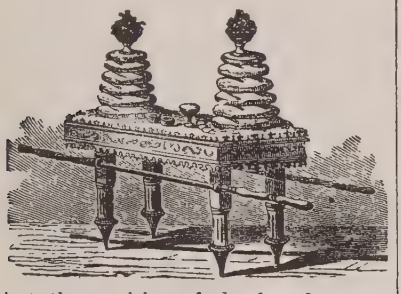
ferent term in the Hebrew from the ordinary word for *tent;* as if the word became consecrated to this sacred tent. It was the temporary travelling *temple* during the wilderness age, subsequently replaced by the temple of Solomon at Jerusalem. Note on Matt. xxi, 12. **The first**—There were two apartments to the **tabernacle;** the front one, curtained by **the veil,** (instead of a door,) which was called **the sanctuary,** or *the holy place*, or *the holy.* In this apartment our apostle enumerates *three* furnishings. **The candlestick**—The *candelabrum*, or chandelier, fully described in Exod. xxv, 31–40. It consisted of a central shaft, erected on a base, with three arms or branches extending on each of its two sides, thus forming the sacred number *seven.* On the summit of shaft and of each arm was a lamp, thus giving to the holy place a sevenfold light. Into the lamps every evening was poured pure olive oil to the amount of about two wine glasses full each, and the wicks, made of cotton, were lighted by the priests. In Solomon's temple the number of chandeliers was increased to ten, but in the Herodian temple the number again was one. This last chandelier was carried by Titus to Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem; and there is still extant a representation of it in the triumphal "Arch of Titus" in that city. The ordinary reckoning of the three furnishings of the holy place was, *the table*, the *altar of incense*, and the *candlestick;* our apostle postpones the altar to the holy of holies, and reckons the table and bread as two. **The table**—Made (Exod. xxv, 23–30) of the durable shittim wood, or acacia, overlaid with pure gold. It was two cubits long, a cubit broad, and a cubit and a half high, with rings for the insertion of bars for carrying: and with its furniture of dishes, bowls, and spoons, was of pure gold.



the showbread; which is called [2] the sanctuary. **3** [f] And after the second vail, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all; **4** Which

2 Or, *holy*.—*f* Exod. 26. 31, 33; 40. 3, 21; chap. 6. 19.

Showbread—Heb., *the bread of faces;* that is, the "presence bread," or bread before the face of the divine Resident between the cherubim. The Greek phrase in full, here, signifies *the setting forth of the bread;* meaning, not the *act*



but the position of the bread, as set forth, or presented before the present Jehovah. By Luther it was translated *schau brode;* whence our English **showbread,** indicating its exhibition or presentation before God. There were twelve loaves, symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel. They were placed in double rows of six, and were renewed every week; those of the previous being eaten by the priests in the holy place, from which it was unlawful to remove them. **Sanctuary**—The Greek *ἁγια, sanctuary,* or holy place, is the same word as in verse 1, (in a different grammatical number,) and as is rendered **holiest** in verse 8.

3. **Holiest of all**—Or, holy of holies, or most holy. There were thus seven graduated degrees of holiness of the sacred locality: First, the mercy seat between the cherubim; second, the most holy; third, the holy; fourth, the court of the priests; fifth, the court of Israel; sixth, the court of the women; and, seventh, the court of the Gentiles.

4. **Golden censer**—A **censer** (a shortened form of *incenser*) was a vessel for containing the ritual incense. The Greek word here *θυμιατήριον* (*thumiaterion*) may signify any bearer of incense, whether vessel or altar. Delitzsch affirms that the **censer** proper (though appearing, incorrectly, in our translation) is not mentioned in the Pen-

tateuch, but only the *coal pan* in which were the embers for burning incense. On the great day of atonement the priest entered the holy of holies, with the coal pan containing coals from the Great Brazen Altar in his left hand, and the censer in the right; and, setting down the former before the ark, he shook the incense over the coals, producing the fragrant vapour. Twice only is the *censer* in the temple of Solomon called *thumiaterion;* but in the age of our apostle, by Philo and Josephus the term is applied to the golden altar of incense. There can be no reasonable doubt that such is its meaning here. For it can hardly be supposed that our apostle would specify so incidental a utensil as the censer, and omit so important an object as the golden altar of incense.

The main reason against the altar is, that it seems to be said to stand in the holy of holies, whereas a glance at our diagram shows that it is a central object in the holy place. But it is equally true that the censer was not in the holiest, being usually kept in the utensil room: a silver one for daily use, and a golden for the great day of atonement, when it was taken by the high priest into the holiest, used, brought back, and returned to the utensil room. But it is not really said, or truly meant, that the *thumiaterion* was *in* the holiest. The **wherein** of verse 2 is significantly changed to **had** in verse 4. Now **had** is the more generic term, and may mean either that

had the golden censer, and [g] the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* [h] the golden pot that had manna, and

g Exod. 25. 10; 26. 33; 40. 3, 21.

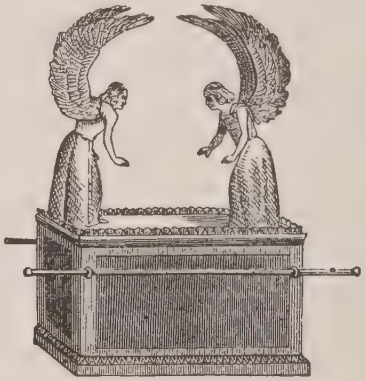
h Exod. 16. 33, 34.

the object was *in* the holiest, or was appropriated to the use of the holiest; and the latter was the fact with the incense altar. There are points that show that, in the mind of a Hebrew, the altar *belonged* to the **holiest.** 1. Its position was directly in front of the position of the ark of the covenant. Hence in 1 Kings vi, 22, it is called "the altar which was by the oracle;" or, more literally, *the altar belonging to the inner apartment*, the very phrase by which a Hebrew would say that *the inner apartment* **had** *the altar.* 2. On the day of atonement the altar, as well as the inner shrine of the **holiest,** was sprinkled with blood.

The *altar of incense* was called *golden* to distinguish it from the great *brazen* altar of burnt offerings, placed in front of the tabernacle, and afterwards temple, under the open sky. No victim was offered upon the golden altar, but on the great day of atonement the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled upon its four horns. This **golden** altar was made of the durable acacia, overlaid entire with pure gold, and was one cubit in length and breadth, and two in height. It had a horn projecting upwards from each of its four corners, and a border lining its top to keep things from falling off.

The sacred *incense* (the English word is from *incendio, to burn*) was composed of ingredients divinely prescribed in Exod. xxx, 34. Of this composition all other than the holy use was severely forbidden. Morning and evening, daily, was the incense offered. See note on Luke i, 9. On the great day of atonement the incense was offered, and the blood sprinkled, by the high priest alone.

King Jehovah was at first sole sovereign of Israel, and the tabernacle, as afterwards the temple, was symbolically his house; and his personal abode was, as we shall soon more fully see, in the holiest. To symbolize his presence, in the solemn absence of all idol, image, or visible form, was his bread upon the table, his candlestick, and his fragrant perfumery. And this last, the incense, becomes a beautiful image of devout emotions and prayers, issuing from the censer as from a glowing heart, upward in its movement, and acceptably reaching the divine Receiver. **Ark of the covenant**—The sacred **ark,** or chest, in which was deposited the **covenant,** or decalogue, and other things soon to be mentioned. Exodus xxv, 10–16. As the decalogue is sometimes called *covenant*, and sometimes *testimony*, so we have the epithets, *ark of the covenant, ark of the testimony.* It



was made of acacia, gold-plated without and within, was two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half broad, and a cubit and a half high. It had borders, rings, and staves, like the table. Its lid, of pure gold, served both as the cover of the ark and the throne of Jehovah, whose glory there attested his presence. As it was here that the high priest approached with his incense and sacrificial blood for mercy, so this lid was called "the mercy-seat." **Gold**—The most precious of metals, and so symbolizing that our *best*

[i] Aaron's rod that budded, and [k] the tables of the covenant; **5** And [l] over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. **6** Now when these things were thus ordained, [m] the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*. **7** But into the second *went* the high priest alone [n] once every year, not without blood, [o] which he of-

[i] Num. 17. 10. —[k] Exod. 25. 16, 21; 34. 29; 40. 20; Deut. 10. 2, 5; 1 Kings 8. 9, 21; 2 Chron. 5. 10.

[l] Exod. 25. 18, 22; Lev. 16. 2; 1 Kings 8. 6, 7. —[m] Num. 28. 3; Dan. 8. 11. —[n] Exod. 30. 10; Lev. 16. 2, 11, 12, 15, 34; ver. 25. —[o] Chap. 5. 3; 7. 27.

is to be consecrated to God. **Golden pot**—Exod. xvi, 34. The **pot**, or urn, containing a memorial specimen of the miraculous **manna**, was deposited "before the testimony," that is, by the decalogue in the **ark**. But by Solomon's time (1 Kings viii, 9) the vessel had disappeared. Our author follows the Septuagint, and applies to the **pot** the epithet **golden**, which is not found in our copies of the Hebrew. According to the Gemara tradition, after the **ark** was taken by the Philistines, (1 Sam. iv, 11,) disappeared the **pot**, the cruse of anointing oil, **Aaron's rod**, and the coffer which the Philistines sent as a present to the God of Israel. **Rod that blossomed—Blossomed** miraculously, to attest Aaron's right to the priesthood. Num. xvii, 10. **Tables of the covenant**—The two stone **tables** of the decalogue.

5. **Over it the cherubim**—The "cherubim" were symbolical winged figures, presented in different Scriptures with some variation of form. In Ezekiel i, 5–10 they have each four faces; in Revelation (iv, 6–8) they are four figures each with a different face. The four faces represent the highest species of the four kingdoms of the animated creation—man, lion, ox, and eagle. This fact, together with the prevalence of the number *four*, indicates a symbolism of the creation. There are but two at this ark. But, adopting the theory that the ark with its four sides symbolizes the world, we see how the fourness is still preserved. And, further, adopting the interpretation given by Abarnabel and others, that the words (Exod. xxv, 19) "of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubim," mean that the mercy seat and cherubim were all of one piece, then we may see how the cherubim arise as personifications of the cosmos out from the cosmos itself, being, in fact, one with it. The bending of cherubim over the mercy seat is the attitude of reverent study (1 Pet. i, 12) and worship, exhibiting nature in her aspect of obedience to her Ruler. The divine law (like the deposited decalogue) is a hidden secret in the system of nature; and it is surmounted with the throne of mercy shadowed with the cherubim's wings, while over all is the **glory**, the Shekinah, the divine overruling Presence. **Cannot... speak**—For he had already (especially in verse 4) lingered among interesting but less relevant details, and must hasten to the main typical point, the parallelism between the Jewish high priest entering the earthly most holy and our high priest entering the heavenly holy.

6. **Went**—The present tense in the Greek, **the priests** *go* **into**, etc. From the time of the tabernacle, through the times of the temples, down to our apostle's own day, the daily entrance was actually or virtually continued. **Always**—Continuously, daily, and not only yearly. **First tabernacle**—The front apartment, which was **first** to one entering. **Service**—The daily performance of caring for the lamps and burning the incense.

7. **Second**—The most holy. **Once every year**—On the great day of atonement, the tenth day of the month Tisri. On that day he really entered more than literally **once**; but there was but one service, and the whole was but one proper ritual entrance. **Not without blood**—The details are given in Lev. xvi, 2–19. A bullock was slain for the sins of the high priest, and a goat for the sins of the people. **Errors**—A softened term for sins. All sins are **errors**, and all transgressions

fered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: 8 [p]The Holy Ghost this signifying, that [q]the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet stand-

p Chap. 10. 19, 20.

q John 14. 6.

which are not presumptuous sins are here included.

8. **The Holy Ghost**—By whose mind this whole system of symbols was framed. **The way**—Of access to, through Christ. **Into the holiest of all**—As all agree, not the earthly but the heavenly **holiest** is here designated. **Not yet made manifest**—For, while the **first tabernacle** maintained its **standing** as type, the antitype could not coexist with it. Its **standing** as type ceased when Christ went through the transition from earth to heaven, of which the high priest's transition from the holy to the holiest was a shadow. For the holy stands for this world; the veil for the visible firmamental heaven; and the holiest for the highest heaven. Thus:—

TYPICAL.	ANTITYPICAL.
1. Jewish high priest.	Our High Priest.
2. Passing.	Ascending.
3. From the holy to the holiest.	From earth to the highest heaven.
4. Through the veil.	Through the firmamental heaven.
5. After offered victims.	After offering of himself.
6. Once a year.	Once for all.
7. For our symbolical justification.	For our real justification.

It was thus by the real that the ideal is banished. By Christ's death and ascension the antitype comes, and the type vanishes. The true high priest passes through the true tabernacle to the true holiest, and the **first tabernacle** loses its **standing. The first tabernacle**—Does this mean the **first** or front apartment of the **tabernacle,** (as in verses 2 and 6,) or does it mean the entire earthly **tabernacle,** including both apartments, as being **first** in relation to the heavenly as its **second?** The run of English commentators maintains the second view; the later German, as Lünemann and Delitzsch, followed by Alford, the first. We are obliged to coincide with those who maintain the second view. Lünemann's view involves what seems to us the absurdity, that Christ's redemptive entrance into heaven would be forestalled by the continued **standing** of the front apartment, but not by that of the second. You must abolish the holy in order to his heavenly entrance, but not the **holiest.** Why so? If the coming in of the antitype requires the cessation of the type, surely the **holiest** is much more a type of the atonement and the heavenly entrance than the holy. But certainly it is the *whole* **tabernacle** which must fade away before the antitypical fulfilment. Delitzsch argues "that it is not likely" that, having just called the front apartment the **first tabernacle,** he would use the same term in a changed sense. But our writer does, according to Delitzsch's own interpretation, do just that when he calls the earthly **holiest** and the heavenly **holiest** by the same name, in the Greek of verses 3 and 8, without any other warning than the context affords. Alford argues that the *heavenly* would in truth be the **first tabernacle.** But that would be making the antitype precede the type. Doubtless the heavens are earlier than any earthly structure, but not necessarily as a **tabernacle** for the redeemed or the Redeemer. "I go to prepare a place for you," said Christ to the disciples; and it was his earthly death that made the place preparable. Without that death there were no **tabernacle** for us in heaven. And just now is the time to say, that the terms **first tabernacle** and **second tabernacle,** in verses 2, 6, and 7, cannot mean that there were literally *two tabernacles* Such a terminology contradicts the entire *usus loquendi* of Scripture, which wholly unknows more than one **tab-**

ing: **9** Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, [r] that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; **10** *Which stood* only in [s] meats and drinks, and [t] divers washings, [u] and carnal [3] ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation. **11** But Christ being come [v] a high priest [w] of good things to come, [x] by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; **12** Neither [y] by the blood of goats

r Gal. 3. 21; chap. 7. 18, 19; 10. 1, 11.—*s* Lev. 11. 2; Col. 2. 16.—*t* Num. 19. 7, &c.—*u* Eph. 2. 15; Col. 2. 20; chap. 7. 16.

3 Or, *rites*, or, *ceremonies*.—*v* Chapter 3. 1.—*w* Chap. 10. 1.—*x* Chap. 8. 2.—*y* Chap. 10. 4.

ernacle. The plain meaning of **first tabernacle** and **second** in those three verses is, so much of the **tabernacle** as is **first,** or front in order, and **second,** so much as is rear. This is a familiar Latinism, and Lünemann admits that, as suggested by Valckner, it is a perfectly allowable interpretation. We think it undoubtedly the true one. For, very plainly, while the **first** and **second tabernacle** of the previous verses are correlative to each other, **the first tabernacle** of this verse is antithetical and typical to **the more perfect tabernacle** of verse 11.

9. **Which**—All agree that this relative refers to **first tabernacle,** in ver. 8. And that further demonstrates that the whole one **tabernacle** was meant: for is it not clear that it was the one whole **tabernacle** which was a **figure,** a *parable,* of the inefficacy of the type without the antitype? Were not the incense and blood as inefficacious, intrinsically, in the holiest as in the holy? **For the time then present**—Rather, for the time now *inesting;* that is, **time** that is now begun and is in progress. The same phrase is used at Rom. viii, 38; 1 Cor. iii, 22; vii, 26; Gal. i, 4; also, 2 Thess. ii, 2, where see note. **Were offered**—The Greek is in the present tense, *are* **offered.** The offerings are still made, for the temple at the apostle's writing is still standing, and the inefficacy of the ritual still exists. **Make... perfect**—Render justified and right. **Conscience**—The moral consciousness of guilt or innocence.

10. **In meats and drinks, and divers washings**—It is objected that the **gifts and offerings** did not consist in these. Nevertheless, it is true that all the sacrifices but the whole burnt offering, including the showbread, were *eaten,* or at any rate were usual material of food, and so were **meats;** and there were various libations which were **drinks;** and lustrations which were **divers washings.**

b. *Of all this tabernacle and high priestly ritual our self-offering High Priest furnishes the antitype,* 11–14.

11. **But**—The turning point of the momentous contrast between Jewish ritual (1–10) and Christ's self-offering, 11–14. **High priest**—Who is divine bestower **of good things to come;** namely, the **good things** comprehended in the **eternal redemption** of verse 12, which are **to come,** when he shall **appear a second time unto salvation.** Verse 28. **By**—More correctly, *through,* as also the **by** in next verse. **More perfect tabernacle**—Than the **worldly** or earthly **sanctuary** of verse 1, and the **first tabernacle** of verse 8. This **more perfect tabernacle** is the earth, the firmamental heaven, and the highest heaven, **the heaven itself** of verse 24. So (iv, 14) Christ **has passed into the heavens.** So Theodoret, quoted by Lünemann: "The tabernacle had a typical resemblance to the whole cosmos. For it was divided into two apartments by a veil; one of which was called the holy, and the other the holy of holies. And the holy represented the system in the earth; the holy of holies the dwelling-place in the heavens. The veil filled the office of the firmament." **Not made with hands**—No human workmanship was its type; but a tent which **the Lord pitched,** viii, 2. **Not of this building**—Rather, not belonging to this lower creation.

12. **Neither by**—Rather, *through,*

and calves, but [z] by his own blood he entered in [a] once into the holy place, [b] having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. **13** For if [c] the blood of bulls and of goats, and [d] the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; **14** How

[z] Acts 20. 28; Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 19; Rev. 1 5; 5. 9.

[a] Zech. 3. 9; ver. 26, 28; chap. 10. 10.—[b] Dan. 9. 24.—[c] Lev. 16. 14.—[d] Num. 19. 2.

as noted on last verse. The former is *through* a space, this *through* an instrumentality. These two meanings of *through* are fundamentally one, for the action is viewed as passing *through* the instrument to its effect. **Goats and calves**—The **goat** and bullock sacrificed on the great day of atonement. **But by his own blood**—As the **blood** is the life, so the shedding of blood is the ritual symbol of death. And the **blood** of Christ is the visual and verbal symbol of his efficaciously offered life. **The holy place**—The **place** antitypical to the earthly holy of holies, into which the typical high priest annually **entered,** that is, the highest heavens. But, as in verse 11 it is said that Christ passed *through* the more perfect tabernacle, (including, of course, the whole tabernacle, both apartments,) and here it is said he entered the most **holy,** what could this **holy** be which is reached after passing through the antitypical tabernacle? And Delitzsch answers that it is something above the highest heavens, that is, the heaven of the angels and glorified saints; namely, it is the placeless innermost essence of the infinite God himself. All of which seems a most useless speculation. To pass through a building does not mean, in any language, to pass straight through its rooms, and then straight *through* its farthest wall into a space outside and beyond. It would be perfectly natural to say that the Jewish high priest passed *through* the tabernacle to the mercy seat, which stood against the back wall of the rear apartment. And so our High Priest passed through the heavens into the highest heavens. **Having obtained**—By the completed offering of his life. But though the work was done, there still was to be its potential presentation in heaven, and its divine acceptance and eternal ratification. **Redemption**—*Lutrōsis*, a *ransom;* for which, in its primary and usual sense, a *lutron* or *ransom price* is given. What the ransom price is, is declared by Jesus himself in Matthew xx, 28, (where see note,) namely, "his life." And in the present passage the type of the **redemption** is the sacrificial victim dying in the stead of the sinful offerer. This **redemption** is **eternal,** in the endlessness of the deliverance it finally effects; in its non-repetition, being made **once for all;** and in contrast with the Jewish high priestly atonement which served but for a single year, and so must be persistently repeated.

13. **For**—An argument in these two verses for the divine efficiency of the atonement, drawn from three comparative points; thus—1. The blood of animals=the blood of Christ. 2. The purifying of the flesh=the purifying of the conscience. 3. Through animal life=through eternal Spirit. **If**—Not implying a doubt, but assuming a fundamental certainty as basis of the momentous inference. **Ashes of a heifer**—Num. xix, 2–6. Under Jewish law a corpse, as a memento of death and sin, was **unclean;** and its contact rendered a man **unclean,** excluding him from the congregation of Israel until purified. A red **heifer**—*red* as the ruddy colour of life—was burned, and its ashes, mixed with water, were reserved as a purifier to be sprinkled on every person who was **unclean** by the death-touch. The solemn awe of sin and death was impressed by several additional points. The **heifer** was burned without the camp. All the persons performing the rite were **unclean** until evening, and not only the **unclean** man, but the tent in which was the corpse, must be purified by **the ashes** and water. In all this was impressed upon Israel the divine antithesis of God, purity, and life, on one side, and Satan, sin, and death, on the

much more [e]shall the blood of Christ, [f]who through the eternal Spirit [5]offered himself without

[e] 1 Pet. 1. 19; 1 John 1. 7; Rev. 1. 5.—[f] Rom. 1. 4; 1 Pet. 3. 18.—[g] Eph. 5. 2; Tit. 2. 14; chap. 7. 27.—[5] Or, *fault*.

other. **Purifying of the flesh**—Producing a typical purity, and deriving all the power for that from the antitype it represented. Hence, even though it made the conscience quiet, it received not that benefit from the mere material character of the substances used in the rite.

14. **Through the eternal Spirit**—Lünemann enumerates some eight different interpretations of this unusual phrase. A large majority of commentators understand it to mean either the divine second person of the Trinity in Jesus incarnated, or the third person, the Holy Spirit, indwelling and inspiring him. For this last Stuart assigns the following texts: Matt. iv, 1; Mark i, 12; Luke iv, 1; Matt. xii, 28; Luke iv, 18; Matt. iii, 16, 11; Luke iii, 22; John i, 32, 33; iii, 34. This makes, certainly, a genuinely biblical meaning. It assumes that Christ went through the scenes of the atonement in full cooperative accordance with, and under actuation by, the blessed Spirit. Nevertheless, our own view will appear from our threefold parallel given above. And our process brings out a result quite coincident with the view of Delitzsch, (which is treated by Lünemann with almost contempt,) namely, that the **eternal** personal **spirit** of Christ himself, his divine nature, stands in antithesis to the perishing *life* of the animal sacrifice. So, rightly, Delitzsch says: "This **eternal spirit** answers to the animal *soul* (נפש) in the expiatory victims of the Old Testament." The animal becomes a sacrifice through an animal *soul;* Jesus makes himself a sacrifice through an **eternal spirit.** And the phrase is without the definite article in the Greek. Christ is, though rarely, styled a **spirit** in Scripture, and by Paul alone. 1 Cor. xv, 45; 2 Cor. iii, 17, and onward. Hereby the divine nature of the Son of God is brought in, upbearing and giving divine superiority and merit to his atonement. **Without spot**—The usual phrase by which the spotlessness of the victim was expressed in the law; prefiguring the sinlessness of Him who atones for the sins of others. **To God**—And not as a few of the Church fathers taught, to Satan; as if he possessed a conceded authority over all held under penalty of sin. We hold that the sacrifice of himself by Jesus was a divine concession paid to the divine governmental justice. It was **offered to God,** not as a payment or gift **to** him, but as a presentation manifesting that the concession was truly made by which sin is forgiven and government verified. **Your conscience—Your,** carries home the direct appeal to the moral consciousness of those (our Hebrews) addressed. **Conscience**—Our moral nature, which feels the claim of moral obligation, the sense of guilt at its violation, and the sense of purity upon forgiveness and sanctification. And how great that feeling when assured at such a cost and from such a source! **From dead works**—Suggested by the image above detailed of the moral taint from the death-touch. **Dead works** are our corrupting dealings and contact with sin and death, sending a death-taint through our soul. And in contrast with this is **the living God,** whom sin and death would love to kill, but who ever lives, and sends immortal life through soul and body of all who **serve** him.

[h]spot to God, [h]purge your conscience from [i]dead works [k]to serve the living God? **15** [l]And for

[h] Chap. 1. 3; 10. 22.—[i] Chap 6. 1.—[k] Luke 1. 74; Romans 6. 13, 22; 1 Peter 1. 2.—[l] 1 Tim. 2. 5.

c. *By the death of our High Priest, the new covenant is a last will and testament,* 15–18.

The Greek word for **covenant,** διαθήκη, signifies a *disposition* of things, a *dispensation,* an *arrangement.* Hence it includes an arrangement by agreement, that is, a **covenant;** or an arrangement by bequest or dying will, that is, a **testament.** Parenthetically, therefore,

this cause [m] he is the mediator of the new testament, [n] that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, [o] they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. **16** For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity [5] be the death of the testator. **17** For [p] a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. **18** [q] Whereupon neither the first *testament* was [6] dedicated without blood. **19** For when Moses had

m Chap. 7. 22; 8. 6; 12. 24.—*n* Rom. 3. 25; 5. 6; 1 Pet. 3. 18.—*o* Chap. 3. 1.

5 Or, *be brought in.*—*p* Gal. 3. 15.—*q* Exod. 24. 6, etc.—6 Or, *purified.*

and very much as a side thought, the analogy of a testament is brought in as illustrating the death of which the ritual bloodshed was the symbol. The idea of testament, or will, was not, indeed, included in the Hebrew word for *covenant;* nor was a testamentary bequest one of the customs of Israel. Yet our apostle finds in the three facts of an **inheritance,** namely, a bestower, the death of the bestower, and the condition of the inheritance passing down to the inheritor—all the points necessary to be framed into the conception of a **testament.** The sense of covenant does, indeed, still remain; but the newly specified elements in the transaction entitle him to figure it a testamentary covenant.

15. **Mediator**—In this testament-covenant the inherited good comes from God, and Christ is the middleman, receiving from God and transmitting it to the heirs, consequently on the condition of his own death. **The new testament... first testament**—As bequest, will, or covenant, the results of the death of Christ pervaded both dispensations. Hence there was a first testament and a new testament. **By means of death**—His **death.** The condition of the divine bequest not only acts prospectively, to transmit the **inheritance** to all future heirs, but retrospectively, upon those **under the first testament.** So our Hebrews must cheerfully understand that the death of our suffering Jesus not only gives its efficacy to Christianity, but even to ancient Hebraism. **Receive the** fruition of the **promise.**

16. **For**—Assuming this beautiful view of the **covenant** as a **testament,** or bequest by will, the **death of the testator** is required, as by Jesus fulfilled.

18. **Whereupon**—In accordance with this demand of **death** for a **testament,** the emblem of death, namely, **blood,** is freely shed and abundantly used.

d. *As by a profuse typical blood the earthly ritual things are purified, so with a better sacrifice are the heavenly things consecrated,* 19–28.

The profuseness of blood application in the types, 19–22; the correspondences in the antitype, 23–28.

19. **For**—To show with what tokens of **death** the first covenant testament was **dedicated,** our apostle goes back to the memorable scene when Jehovah and Israel first formed their covenant under Moses. Exod. xxiv, 3–8. Fresh from Sinai, Moses, having written the law in a **book,** reads it to the people, who fully assent to the compact between law and obedience. To ratify this compact or covenant, Moses is here described as taking the usual sprinkling-brush—a sprig of hyssop tipped with red wool—dipping it into the blood of slain animals, and sprinkling it over **book** and **people;** and, at a later period, (see note verse 21,) over **tabernacle** and **vessels** used in the ceremonial **ministry. Blood,** shed forth or sprinkled, was the emblem of that death which the sinner deserved; of that death which the victim's death symbolized for him instead of his own death; and which symbolized that death which symbolizes and is made substitute for the death of the world of sinners. As a symbol of the Substitute's death, the **blood** represents the offerer's remission of sin, and so purification, sanctification, and life. And with the

spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, [r] he took the blood of calves and of goats, [s] with water, and [7] scarlet

[r] Exod. 24. 5, 6, 8; Lev. 16. 14, 15, 18.—[s] Lev. 14. 4, 6, 7, 49, 51, 52.

sinner's purification all his ritual surroundings must be purified. As these surroundings are made by sinful man they are tainted with his impurity, and must be purified; and blood is the sole, sovereign, universal, ritual purifier. Blood-besprinkled, they are holy; and so this newly made holy man walks and works amid holy things, a type of the holy beings of a holy heaven. **Had spoken**—Had read from **the book** by him written for the purpose. **According to the law**—The authority for all this use of typical **blood. Calves... goats—Calves and goats** are not mentioned, but were doubtless used, as appears *from other passages of the law.* In Exod. xxiv, 5, (the narrative of the **dedication,**) "it is said that Moses sent *young men who offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed sacrifices, which* (Heb.) *were peace offerings to Jehovah, even bullocks.* Now, although **goats** are not mentioned here, yet it is quite probable that the burnt offerings on this occasion were **goats;** for a burnt offering is a *holocaust;* that is, an offering entirely consumed by fire; while the peace offerings were mostly eaten by the offerers. That **goats** were used for all kinds of sacrifices, as well as bullocks, is quite evident from a mere inspection of the Levitical law; for example, *goats* are named as a burnt offering, Lev. i, 10, iv, 24, 28, etc., and elsewhere. It is altogether probable, then, that the holocausts or burnt offerings mentioned in Exod. xxiv, 5, as offered on the occasion of renewing the covenant, were **goats;** and were, of course, understood by a Jewish reader to be such, inasmuch as the peace offerings only are affirmed to have been *bullocks.*"—*Stuart.* **Water, scarlet wool, and hyssop**—"That water was used as well as blood in order to sprinkle various things is clearly implied in Lev. xiv, 4–7, compared with Lev. xiv, 49–52; Num. xix, 18; Psalm li, 7; Ezek. xxxvi, 25. wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people; **20** Saying, [t] This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath en-

7 Or, *purple.*—[t] Exodus 24. 8; Matthew 26. 28.

The scarlet wool was connected with a branch of hyssop in order to make a convenient instrument for receiving and sprinkling the blood and water. It is not, indeed, expressly mentioned in Exod. xxiv, but it is, doubtless, implied; for this was the common instrument by which the rite of sprinkling was performed. So in Exod. xii, 7, direction is simply given to sprinkle the door posts of the Israelites with blood; and afterwards, in verse 22, it is mentioned that this was to be done *with a branch of hyssop.* So in Lev. xiv, 4–7, the scarlet wool and the hyssop are mentioned as employed in the office of sprinkling; and again in Lev. xiv, 49–52. The hyssop is also mentioned in Num. xix, 18; Psa. li, 7."—*Stuart.* **The book of the law**—"That Moses did sprinkle the **book** with blood no intimation is given in Exod. xxiv, 3–8. Yet nothing can be more probable than that such was the fact. Aaron, and his sons, and their garments, were sprinkled with blood when consecrated to the priest's office. Exod. xxix, 19–21. The blood of sacrifices was sprinkled upon the altar, Exod. xxix, 16; Lev. i, 5, 11; iii, 2, 13; also before the veil of the sanctuary, Lev. iv, 6, 17; compare Lev. vi, 27; vii, 14; viii, 15, 19, 24, 30; ix, 12, 18, and others. Philo (*de Vita Mosis,* page 675, B.) has a passage which speaks of all the various apparatus of the tabernacle as being anointed with holy oil, and the vestments of the priests being sprinkled with blood. So Josephus, also, speaks of sprinkling the garments of Aaron and his sons with the blood of the slain beasts, and with spring water and holy chrism."—*Stuart*

20. **Blood of the testament**—Or bequest. **The blood** indicating the death of the **testator,** and thereby certifying the validity of the **testament** and the security of the **inheritance. Which**—Referring to **testa-**

joined unto you. **21** Moreover [u] he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. **22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and [v] without shed-

[u] Exod. 29. 12, 36; Lev. 8. 15, 19; 16. 14, 15, 16, 18, 19.—[v] Lev. 17 11.—[w] Chap. 8. 5.

ment. **Unto you**—Rather, in regard to **you**; in your behalf. This blood-bought bequest is **enjoined** in our behalf by **God** the Father Almighty. Compare these quoted words with the language of our Saviour. Luke xxii, 20.

21. **Moreover**—At a later period. Stuart says: "The setting up and consecration of the tabernacle with its vessels is related in Exodus xl; yet nothing is there related of sprinkling them with blood, but only of anointing them with holy oil. Exod. xl, 9–11. In the like manner, the *anointing* only of Aaron and his sons is there spoken of as a rite preparatory to entering upon the duties of their office in the tabernacle, Exod. xl, 12–15; while nothing is said at all of their being sprinkled with blood. But if we compare Exod. xxix, 20, 21, and Lev. viii, 24, 30, we shall see it to be certain that Aaron and his sons were sprinkled with blood, as well as anointed with oil. In like manner it is probable that the tabernacle and its furniture were sprinkled with blood, although Moses has not mentioned it in Exodus xl. Josephus says: 'Both the tabernacle and the vessels pertaining to it (Moses sprinkled and purified) with oil prepared as I have described, and with the blood of bulls and rams that were slain, one of each alternately, every day.'"

22. **Almost**—Alford thinks that this word does not qualify **all things**; but it qualifies the whole assertion. We might **almost** say that **all things** were blood-purged. And the **almost** universal law of the Levitical ritual was, **no remission** of sin **without,** that is, *apart from*, blood shedding; referring, beyond question, to the blood shedding of the victim, held by our writer as typical of the **shedding** of the blood of the Lamb of God.

As the blood is ritually the life, so the **shedding of blood** is the ritual symbol of death; of that death, how comprehensive soever it may be, which is the complete penalty of sin.

23. **Therefore**—Inference from the testamentary character of the ritual. **Patterns** — Rather, *copies;* for the heavenly is the *pattern*, and the earthly is its copy. **These**—Blood sheddings. **Heavenly things**—Literally, the *heavenlies;* same word as in Ephesians i, 3, where see note. The phrase here is unequivocally local, signifying **things** and places in the *highest heavens*, as is absolutely shown by **in the presence of God**, verse 24. See notes on 2 Cor. xii, 2; Eph. ii, 2; 1 Thess. iv, 17.

But it is a question among commentators how the *heavenlies* could be said to be **purified** by Christ's sacrificial death. Alford, following Delitzsch, understands that the highest heavens, though intrinsically perfectly pure, are **purified** from the divine *wrath* towards sin, and so rendered approachable by man. But the idea of sanctifying, not from sin but from wrath, seems rather inadmissible.

We may note that Christ says, (John xiv, 2,) "I go to prepare a place for you." So that some preparation of "a place," either in fact or in effect, was to be made subsequently to his ascension. Now, to sanctify a thing, is to set it apart. Note on 1 Thess. v, 23. So, ritually, inanimate things and *places* were sanctified or set apart for special divine uses. And this was, ritually, done by blood. Intrinsically, the place or thing could not be any holier after the rite than before it. It was only relatively, and by a relative setting apart or consecrating, that the thing or place could be holy—holy for a certain occupancy or use. Now *space* or *place*, even in the superstellar regions, can have only this relative holiness. A

24 For [x] Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of [y] the true; but into heaven itself, now [z] to appear in the presence of God for us: **25** Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as [a] the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; **26** For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now [b] once [c] in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. **27** [d] And as it is appointed unto men once to die, [e] but after this the judgment: **28** So [f] Christ was once [g] offered to bear the sins

[x] Chap. 6. 20.——[y] Chap. 8. 2.——[z] Rom. 8. 34; chap. 7. 25; 1 John 2. 1.——[a] Ver. 7.——[b] Ver. 12; chap. 7. 27; 10. 10; 1 Pet. 3. 18.——[c] 1 Cor. 10. 11; Gal. 4. 4; Eph. 1. 10.——[d] Gen. 3. 19; Eccles. 3. 20.——[e] 2 Cor. 5. 10; Rev. 20. 12, 13.——[f] Rom. 6. 10; 1 Pet. 3. 18.——[g] 1 Pet. 2. 24; 1 John 3. 5.

locality can be holy only by holy uses and the holy things it may contain. By the sacrificial death and ascension of Christ he does prepare a place for us, making it relatively holy—relatively a fit place for beings rendered holy by his sacrifice. Conceptually, the heaven of the redeemed, as well as the redeemed themselves, are rendered holy by the efficacy of the atonement. As the high priest was **better,** and the sanctuary **better,** so the **sacrifices** were **better.**

We have now, in 24–28, three contrastive parallelisms. 1. Between the sanctuary entered by Christ and that of the human high priest, verse 24. 2. Between the singleness of Christ's sacrifice and the repetition of the Jewish sacrifices, verses 25 and 26. 3. Between Christ's death and its results, and man's death and its results. The summary of the whole is this. Christ enters not an earthly sanctuary, but the highest heavens, where is the real presence of God; he does this, not by repetition, but once for all; and as men *once* die and go to the judgment bar to be judged, so Christ *once* dies and goes to the judgment throne to judge.

24. **For**—Reason for the **better** of last verse. **Made with hands**—Humanly built, as in verse 11, where see note. **True**—Original and real. **Heaven itself**—Of which the second apartment, the **holiest,** was type. **The presence of God**—Typified by the glory on the mercy-seat of the ark, between the cherubim. **For us**—Just as the earthly sacrifice or victim was **for us,** the human offerers.

25. The true sacrifice was **once for all,** as the typical were repeated and **often. Offer himself**—This **offer** is parallel to the **entereth** of **the high priest;** it, therefore, does not here mean to sacrifice **himself,** but to present **himself** in heaven, as the high priest presented himself in **the holy place.** Yet in both cases a previous sacrifice takes place.

26. **Often have suffered**—The One great sacrifice was often typified by the dying victims as successive human sinners sacrificed them. Had there been but one victim his sacrifice must have ever been repeated; he must have died millions of deaths. **Since the foundation of the world**—From as early as man began to sin and needed a sacrifice. **But now**—As the fact really is. **In the end of the world**—In the together-ending of the ages. The Greek word here (as in Matthew xiii, 39, 40, 49; xxiv, 3; xxviii, 20) is *συντέλεια,* compounded of two words signifying *together* and *ending:*—an epoch where all the threads of events converge to a common terminus. Such an epoch was the first advent; a still greater epoch will be the second advent. **To put away,** or abolish, **sin**—Both by justification from the guilt, and sanctification from the power, of **sin. Sacrifice of himself**—Rather, by his own **sacrifice,** not that of a human high priest.

27. With **men** the law is first death and then **judgment;** with Christ it is, by parallelism, first sacrifice of himself for sin, and then an advent to a **judgment** glorious for believers. **Appointed**—By God as the established order of things. **The judgment**—Without the Greek article.

28. **Once**—The first point of com-

[h] of many; and unto them that [i] look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

[h] Matthew 26. 28; Romans 5. 15.—[i] Titus 2. 13; 2 Pet. 3. 12.

parison—that Christ died **once** as men **die once,** his death being sacrificial. Second point—between **judgment** and **appear.** From different quarters the bodies of **men** and the person of **Christ** meet at one terminus. He descends from heaven, they ascend from earth; he to judge, they to be judged. Third point of comparison—between **bear the sins** and **without,** or irrespective of, **sin.** Christ died under the weight of human **sins;** he returns **without** connexion with **sin. Unto salvation**—It is **judgment** for all; it is **salvation** only to those **that look for,** or await **him,** with hopeful expectation. As writing to Christians, our author takes into view only the blessed side of the **judgment.**

On the last two verses we may note:—

1. Of whatever other things men are sceptical, none doubt, however they may try to forget, that they must **die.** This is **appointed** by the great Author of nature, who has the right to take the life he gives. And if Edenic man was at first placed above this law, yet by sin he sunk into the level of nature under the **appointed** penalty of death. See note on Rom. v, 12.

2. But as sure as death is **appointed unto men,** so sure, also, an **after judgment.** Suffering, discipline, may belong to this life, but the real retributive **judgment** comes **after** life has closed. God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained. Acts xvii, 31.

3. How long the interval **after** death until the **judgment** our apostle expresses no opinion. Conceptually it was a momentous event; and, like God himself, however distant it is yet nigh at hand. It should take place when Christ should **appear a second time;** and that is not to be until the close of this new dispensation or covenant, which is second to the first, as the eighth chapter fully states.

4. The intermediate disembodied state is one of hopeful **expectation** of that second coming. Saints, both in the body and out of the body, are agreed in this looking-for of that glorious appearing. Death is not the point on which the Christian heart most deeply rests; paradise is not the goal to which we most earnestly look, but the advent, the glorious resurrection, the **judgment,** and eternal life.

CHAPTER X.

FOR the law having [a] a shadow [b] of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things,

a Colossians 2. 17; chapter 8. 5; 9. 23.
b Chap. 9. 11.

CHAPTER X.

3. Our high priesthood is all-sufficient—animal blood being intrinsically worthless for pardon of sin—is antitypical, and is replaced by the all-sufficient self-offered blood, 1-18.

a. *As animal blood is intrinsically worthless for our justification,* 1–4.

This worthlessness of the animal sacrifices does not imply that pardon was not granted by God, and peace of conscience produced by them for the offerer. It is simply meant that those blessings did not ensue from any real value in the things themselves; that their nature had no availing power; and that they could have been enjoined by God only as indexes to a sacrifice of such transcendent intrinsic value as to be true basis of such results.

1. **For**—Referring to the repeated declarations reigning through ix, 24–28, that Christ has made a decisive, perfecting atonement, once for all. **Shadow**—A dim representation. **Good things to come**—That is, **to come** in this our Messianic dispensation. See notes on ii, 5; vi, 5; ix, 11. **Image of the things**—That is, **image,** consisting **of the things;** the form filled with the substance. For though the **good things** of the present dispensation look forward to a higher completion here-

[c] can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto [d] perfect. **2** For then [1] would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. **3** [e] But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. **4** For [f] *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. **5** Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, [g] Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body [2] hast thou prepared me: **6** In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for

c Chap. 9. 9.——*d* Ver. 14.——1 Or, *they would have ceased to be offered, because,* &c.——*e* Lev. 16. 21; chap. 9. 7.

f Micah 6. 6, 7; chap. 9. 13; ver. 11.——*g* Psa. 40. 6, &c.; 50. 8, &c.; Isa. 1. 11; Jer. 6. 20; Amos 5. 21, 22.——2 Or, *thou hast fitted me.*

after, yet in Christ and his atonement it possesses the shape and substance of that future glory. **Year by year**—The yearly offering on the great day of atonement. **Continually**—Without interruption of the annual rite. **Perfect**—Pure from the guilt and power of sin; right before God; fit for heaven.

2. **Ceased to be offered**—Had the law been able by a finished act, **once for all,** as Christ has performed, to finish men for glory, the continuity of the sacrifices would have been unnecessary. Their very continuous repetition, therefore, is the very demonstration of their inferiority.

3. **But** these sacrifices, so far from being an abolition **of sins,** are a reminder and **remembrance** of **sins, every year;** namely, on the day of atonement.

4. **For**—Reason why they do not abolish sin. The death of an animal is no real atonement for the sins of a man. There is no rational adequacy in the case. A sacrifice of a higher nature is demanded.

b. *So the decisive atonement is made by Christ's submission to the demands for it,* 5–18.

5. **Wherefore**—In consequence of this demand for an adequate sacrifice. **He**—The great unnamed, yet well-known. **Cometh into the world**—The words of Psa. xl, 6–8 are adduced as illustrating the spirit and pure purpose of the Messiah's entrance into our sublunary world. The psalm was probably written by David at the period when the troubles with Saul had terminated, and he was about to assume the open royalty. By experience he had learned that richest offerings were less acceptable to Jehovah than profound obedience to the divine commands. Submissively, therefore, he had waited the divine will; submissively he is now ready to come to the throne, there to perform the divine purposes. Our author sees in him a permanent type, and here, at least, a parallel, of the Son of God entering on his mediatorial office in our **world.** Perowne elegantly thus versifies the passage of the psalm:—

"In sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight,—
Mine ears hast thou opened,—
Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.

Then said I, 'Lo, I come,—
In the roll of the book it is prescribed to me:—

To do thy pleasure, O my God, I delight;
Yea, thy law is in my inmost heart.'"

Sacrifice...not—It was by an obedient heart and penitent soul that even under the Old Testament the **sacrifice** was made available. The **offering** was not the substitute of devout feeling, but the outward symbol and expression of it. When David wrote this, he doubtless knew that Samuel had lately said to Saul, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" **A body hast thou prepared me**—The Hebrew, as given by Perowne, is, "Mine ears hast thou opened." More literally, *Ears hast thou dug out for me.* That is, *thou hast framed me with a hearing ear-passage;* so that I am a creature able to listen and obey. This the Septuagint version translated, or rather paraphrased, as quoted here by our author, **a body hast thou** fit

sin thou hast had no pleasure. **7** Then said I, [h] Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. **8** Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *there-*

[h] Prov. 8. 31; John 4. 34.—[i] Chap. 9. 11, 14.

ted (or constructed) for me; namely, to be an obedient creature to thee. The ultimate thought is precisely the same: *thou hast organized me for responsible obedience.* The Hebrew makes God frame an ear-passage in order to the creature's obedience; the Septuagint makes him frame the whole **body** for such obedience. The Hebrew puts a part for the whole; the Septuagint puts the whole. Such a *whole*, namely, a whole **body,** was truly framed for David at birth, and still more eminently for Christ at the incarnation. The Seventy thought that the mention of *ears* alone was too little intelligible, and so they explained, boldly but correctly, by substituting **body.**

It is often assumed that our author quotes the words as proof—or at least illustration—of the incarnation. That is not quite clearly the case. If, however, David's obedient approach into the kingdom is type of Messiah's **coming into the world,** then his being divinely framed with a physique for an obedient free-agent is a very fair illustration of Messiah's incarnation.

Some critics hold that the words came into the Septuagint by a copyist's mistake. They suppose that in the word for *ears*, ΩΤΙΑ, the letters **TI** were miswritten **M**; and that the last letter of the preceding word, which was a C=Σ, was repeated so as to make CΩMA, *body.* This is, to say the least, ingenious. Supposing it to be a miswriting, still, if found in the current Septuagint of the apostles' day, our writer would properly quote as his text stood. But the above explanation of the translation by the Seventy makes the supposition as unnecessary as it is unprovable.

7. In the volume of the book—Note, Matt. i, 1. The **book** may be

in; which are offered by the law; **9** Then said he, [i] Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. **10** [k] By the which will we are sanctified [l] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all.* **11** And every priest

[k] John 17. 19; chap. 13. 12.—[l] Chap 9. 12.

the Pentateuch. David had been already anointed king by Samuel; and he doubtless understood that Jacob's dying prophecy predicting that the *royalty should be in Judah's line*, was now being fulfilled in him. In obedience to the prediction of **the book,** he has now **come to do** Jehovah's **will** upon the throne, as Saul did not.

8, 9. Now for our author's application of the passage quoted. He argues that the psalmist, **first,** (verse 9,) depreciates **sacrifices and offerings**; and, **second,** exalts willing obedience; and then (verse 10) infers that by that obedient **will** our atonement was wrought.

10. **By the which will**—The **will,** namely, of verse 9, the **will** of the Father, with which the will of the Son identifies itself. **Body**—This may be a reference to the **body** of verse 5, and then the incarnation is illustratively read by our author into that clause. We prefer to refer both this term and the phrase **cometh into the world,** to the incarnation.

Our apostle now completes his argumentative section with *two* reiterations, yet with variation, of his conclusion, to impress the sum total on the minds of his readers. Verses 11–13 and 14–18. The former of the *two*, comparing our High Priest with the Levitical, concludes with his triumphant and divine enthronement on high. The latter gives a description of his sanctifying work in the Church below, completing our full remission, and rendering further offering for sin forever unnecessary. The former leaves the Redeemer enthroned in heaven until the final consummation; the latter traces the events of his heavenly sway on earth, preparing that consummation.

11. **Every priest**—A balance of

standeth [m]daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, [n]which can never take away sins: **12** [o]But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; **13** From henceforth expecting [p]till his enemies be made his footstool. **14** For by one offering [q]he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. **15** *Whereof* [r]the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, **16** [s]This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; **17** [s]And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. **18** Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin.

19 Having therefore, brethren,

m Num. 28. 3; chap. 7. 27.—*n* Ver. 4.—*o* Col. 3. 1; chap. 1. 3.—*p* Psa. 110. 1; Acts 2. 35; 1 Cor. 15. 25; chap. 1. 13.

q Ver. 1.—*r* 2 Sam. 23. 2; Neh. 9 30; John 15. 26.—*s* Jer. 31. 33, 34; chap. 8. 10, 12.—[s] Some copies have, *Then he said, And their.*

authorities reads here, **Every high priest.** Alford prefers this reading on the ground that it involves a difficulty, and so would not be introduced by a copyist. The difficulty is, that the high priest did not sacrifice **daily,** but only annually, on the day of atonement. This difficulty Alford evades by maintaining that the *priests* were really all agents, through whom the high priest performed all the sacrifices. Delitzsch rejects Alford's evasion, and decides that the reading, *high priest,* is a mere copyist's correction of this text drawn from v, 1; viii, 3; and ix, 25.

13. **Expecting**—Awaiting the promised time, according to Psa. cx, 1. This process of bringing all in subjection to Christ is, we hold, now in historical progress, and will be completed by the work of the judgment-day at the second advent, according to 1 Cor. xv, 24–28, where see notes.

14. **Perfected for ever . . . sanctified**—He has **once,** fully and **forever,** potentially and conditionally, **perfected** all; but the full reality takes effect only in those who are **sanctified** through faith in him.

15. And now our writer clenches his argument by recalling the picture of the new dispensation quoted in chap. viii, 8–13. **The Holy Ghost**—The inspirer of the psalm. **After . . . had said before**—This quotation from the Old Testament is so obscured both by the translation and the division into verses that we translate it thus: *For after having* (by way of announcement) *said,* "*This is the covenant which I will covenant with them after those days,*" *the Lord saith,* (superadds,) "*I will put my laws into their hearts,*" etc.

16. **This**—A comparison will show that our author requotes with verbal variations but essential sameness.

17. **Will I remember no more**—Implying that an atonement is made never needing to be repeated; that a potential, perfect salvation is conditionally wrought out for every man; and that the justification is complete, needing no new sacrifice to give it perfection. There is, as said next verse, **no more offering for sin,** because the efficacy of the one **offering** made is perpetual and ever availing.

The argument is now closed. By Christ's atonement the old ritual is superseded. A new and more glorious dispensation is inaugurated. Nothing now remains but an unfolding of the awful consequences of apostatizing from that dispensation, and the glory of an adhering faith. This unfolding occupies the remainder of the epistle.

PART SECOND.

ADMONITORY, INSPIRATIONAL, AND PERSONAL, CONCLUSIONS.

1. Admonitory—Having such a High Priest, beware of unbelief tending to apostasy and death, 19–39.

19. **Having**—In 19–22 we have a somewhat varied typical structure.

[t] boldness to enter [u] into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, **20** By [v] a new and living way, which he hath [5] consecrated for us, [w] through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

t Rom. 5. 2; Eph. 2. 18; 3. 12.——4 Or, *liberty.* ——*u* Chap. 9. 8, 12.——*v* John 10. 9; 14. 6; chap. 9. 8.——5 Or, *new made.*

Since the true atonement, Christians are a *new Israel*, and their divine privileges are sketched as parallel, yet superior, to those of the *old Israel.* The parallel in detail may be tabulated as follows:—

Us, the new Israel	—	the old Israel.
Our immediate access to God	—	Israel's temple access.
The gracious Presence	—	The holiest.
By blood of Jesus	—	By animal sacrifices.
Through his flesh	—	Through the temple veil.
Our High Priest	—	The Jewish high priest.

In this our new temple, **the house of God,** we have **a high priest,** Jesus; under him an *entrance* even to **the holiest,** or gracious divine Presence; by sacrifice, namely, his shed **blood;** through **the veil,** his crucified **flesh. Therefore**—As a deduction from the entire previous argument. This full hortatory and personal deduction occupies the remainder of the epistle. **Boldness**—Both of heart and utterance. This **boldness** of heart is founded on our confidence in our mighty and royal **High Priest.** It pours itself forth in great freedom of utterance, namely, of prayer, of thanksgiving, and of profession and testimony to the world. **To enter**—Literally, of *entrance;* like Israel's *entrance* before God into the sanctuary. But the new Israel enters with its **high priest,** even to **the holiest. The holiest** into which Christ entered is, indeed, *the highest heaven,* (viii, 1; ix, 24;) but in the present parallelism the divine Presence to which the Christian, through the atonement, has access, is, though locally different, yet spiritually identical with that. **Blood**—The most real antitype to the **blood** of the animal victims offered when, on the great day of atonement, the Jewish high priest entered **the holiest.**

20. **New and living way**—The route by which the Jewish high priest

21 And *having* [x] a high priest over [y] the house of God; **22** [z] Let us draw near with a true heart [a] in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled [b] from an evil con-

w Chap. 9. 3.——*x* Chap. 4. 14.——*y* 1 Tim. 3. 15.——*z* Chap. 4. 16.——*a* Eph. 3. 12; James 1. 6; 1 John 3. 21.——*b* Chap. 9. 14.

entered **the holiest** was through two veils; ours is through the **living,** yet dying, **way,** the **flesh,** the crucified body of Jesus. Christ affirms, (John xiv, 6,) "I am the *way,* the truth, and the life." The crucifixion of that **flesh** was the lifting of that **veil,** as the shedding of his **blood** was the attendant sacrifice. This **living way** was also **new.** The Greek word for **new,** is applied to any thing *fresh* and *novel.* The **new** access was a fresh institution, arising after the old had faded and truly vanished.

21. **House of God**—The new temple, embracing primarily the entire new structure of salvation through the atonement, of which the temple and its ritual were typical. Hence this new temple, in its full physical significance, embraces earth, the firmament, and the highest heaven; the entire scene and structure of the divine history.

22. Having so magnificent an access as stated in 19–21, our author now, in the following three verses, exhorts us with a **let us** thrice presented: namely, **let us draw near, let us hold fast,** and **let us consider one another.** The *first* regards our free access to God; the *second,* our firmness in profession; the *third,* our use of the communion of saints in maintaining the previous two, namely, our gracious access and our firm profession. The first **let us** is, **let us** gladly **draw near.** God in his holy place may be freely and boldly approached; who will not hasten to **draw near?** And so in this verse we have a delightful picture of the adorer in this new temple sweetly approaching a loving God. **Heart, conscience,** and **body** are all pure. **A true heart**—**True** in its freedom from all insincerity or wavering; **true** in its fidelity and firmness. **Full assurance**—Not only firmness, but ex-

science, and [c] our bodies washed with pure water. **23** [d] Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; for [e] he *is* faithful that promised; **24** And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: **25** [f] Not forsaking the assembling

[c] Ezekiel 36. 25; 2 Corinthians 7. 1.—[d] Chapter 4. 14.

[e] 1 Cor. 1. 9; 10. 13; 1 Thess. 5. 24; 2 Thess. 3. 3. chap. 11. 11.—[f] Acts 2. 42; Jude 19.

ultant and aggressive **assurance.** The temple imagery is beautifully preserved throughout. It was by blood **sprinkled** upon them that the priests entered before God; that **sprinkled** blood implying their purification by atonement. Exod. xxix, 21; Lev. viii, 30. And Aaron and his sons **washed** their hands and feet in the brazen laver. Exod. xxx, 20, and xl, 30–32. On the great day of atonement the high priest washed his whole body with water. Lev. xvi, 4. **Evil conscience**—As we say, "a guilty conscience;" that is, a personal consciousness of being guilty. **Bodies washed**—It is unexegetical, with Alford and others, to find here a distinct allusion to baptism. The thought is not of a material **body,** literally **washed** with **water,** any more than of a material **heart,** literally **sprinkled** with blood; or any more than the **house of God** (ver. 21) is a material **house.** The **heart** is here spiritually **sprinkled,** as the image of interior purity; the **body,** spiritually **washed,** is the image of external rectitude of life. This verse, both in the Greek and the English, is a fine specimen of rhythm.

It is a very important fact that our author ascribes this privilege of immediate access to every Christian. Each for himself approaches to, and communes with, God. No human substitute stands in his place before God, or stands in God's place before him. No one offers a sacrifice for him, and he offers no literal sacrifice for himself. The one priest is Christ, and the one sacrifice is that of himself, **once for all.**

The apostles, the ministers of the New Testament, as not performing sacrifice and as not being substitutes, are not priests. Yet all the leading institutions of the Old Testament Church have a modified continuity in the New. The high priesthood has its eternal continuity in Christ. The predictive sacrifices are shadowed in the commemorative Lord's supper. Circumcision is represented by baptism; the sabbath by "the Lord's day." And so the priesthood of the Old Testament has its representative in the ministry, namely, the apostle, the bishop, the elder, and the deacon, of the New. While no form of government is prescribed in the New Testament with Levitical precision, and large freedom is left to the Church to frame its own organization, there are nevertheless forms, sanctioned by "the New Testament and the example of the primitive Church," which are truly preferable, the absence of which, though not an invalidation, is yet a defect in a church organization.

23. **Let us hold fast**—As we have a new and immeasurably superior access to **the holiest, let us** firmly maintain the *confession,* (rather than, as in our translation, **profession.**) There must be no relapse to the old. **For**—Encouraging assurance, if we are firm on our part there will be no failure on God's part. It is God who has **promised,** and he will be **faithful.**

24. The third **let us;** it embraces our availing ourselves of Christian fellowship in maintaining our Christian fidelity. **Consider one another**—Realize each other's value for mutual incitement **unto love** as a Christian affection, and **good works** as a Christian conduct. So far our author touches upon the mutual Christian aids between individuals. Every man may in personal intercourse encourage, inspire, and strengthen his fellow. Next verse specifies the collective aids.

25. **Assembling of yourselves together**—This plainly refers to voluntary meetings of Christians for mutual Christian inspiration and encouragement. Assuming, as we here do, that Jerusalem is the city to whose Christ-

of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is;* but exhorting *one another:* and [g]so much the more, as ye see [h]the day approaching. **26** For [i]if we sin wilfully [k]after that we have received the knowl-

[g] Rom. 13. 11.—[h] Phil. 4. 5; 2 Pet. 3. 9, 11, 14.

[i] Num. 15. 30; chap. 6. 4.—[k] 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21.

ian people this epistle was addressed, not long before the destruction by Titus, we catch a brief glimpse of the interior of city and Church. The Greek word here, *ἐπισυναγωγή, episynagogue,* can hardly be other than a Christian *synagogue.* Note, James ii, 2. The assemblies remind us of the early meetings of the pentecostal Church (Acts ii, 42–47) "from house to house," for mutual aid in Christian life. The warm, central heart of the Church, now as then, maintains its collective vitality by frequent **assembling together.** But outside that central living heart is a number of loose hangers-on, whose **manner** is that of **forsaking,** through lukewarmness, negligence, or fear of persecution, or dread of popular contempt. They were once converted; were once themselves a part of the central live heart; but they have gradually receded to the outskirts of the Church, and are probable candidates for apostasy. **Exhorting**—The efficient means in their assemblies for maintaining the Christian life. This expressive word blends the ideas of *calling forth, admonishing, arousing,* and *consoling;* and for each of these various strains there would be those in that day of trial whose case made demand. **The day**—These words are addressed to that Jerusalem whose destruction Jesus so fully predicted in Matt. xxiv, xxv, on which chapters see our notes. The word **day** is not here to be limited to a literal period of twenty-four hours. **Ye see...approaching**—Lünemann, who belongs to the class of interpreters who maintain that the apostles held the second advent to be about to occur in their own day, says, that both writer and reader "beheld the advent as approaching in the Jewish war, indicated by disturbances and commotions which had already commenced." How the indications of the Jewish war should imply the second advent to be **approaching,** he does not explain. They did indicate, as Christ predicted, the downfall of Jerusalem; but the incorrectness of assuming that our Lord confounded the destruction of Jerusalem with his own second advent we trust we have shown in our notes on his great prediction. Eusebius informs us, that the Christians, rightly interpreting our Lord's words not as predicting the end of the world but the destruction of the city, fled to Pella, and so escaped. They did flee, not to escape Christ's second coming, but to escape the Roman armies. See note on Matt. xxiv, 16. Of the various signs by which these Jerusalem Christians could **see the day approaching,** see an enumeration in our notes upon Mark xiii, 7–9. But while this passage is properly applied, not to the second advent, but to the destruction of the city to which it is addressed, it is none the less absurd to apply passages addressed to localities far distant from Jerusalem to the same event. We hold it entirely inadmissible to apply 2 Thess. i, 7–10 to the destruction of Jerusalem. Thessalonica was in Europe, Jerusalem in Asia. That neither Christ nor his apostles taught that the second advent would be in their own day, see supplementary note at close of Matt. xxv.

26. **If we sin**—The word **sin** here is to be taken as in a continuous or general present tense. The meaning is, **If** from saints **we** become sinners; that is, by total apostasy. See note on 1 John 3: 10. **Wilfully**—Against clear light and knowledge, usually preceded by **forsaking the assembly.** How flagrant and conscious the return to **sin** is here supposed, is indicated by the fearful language of verse 29. **Knowledge**—Says Lünemann, "This *ἐπίγνωσις* of the absolute truth embraces, in addition to an acquaintance with it through the understanding, also its internal power through experience and life." It was not necessarily a one atrocious sin for which the Hebrews are so terribly condemned, for

edge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, **27** But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and [l] fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. **28** [m] He that despised Moses's law died without mercy [n] under two or three witnesses: **29** [o] Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and [p] hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing,

l Ezek. 36. 5; Zeph. 1. 18; 3. 8; 2 Thess. 1. 8; chap. 12. 29.——*m* Chap. 2. 2.——*n* Deut. 17. 2, 6; 19. 15; Matt. 18. 16; John 8. 17; 2 Cor. 13. 1.——*o* Chap 2. 3; 12. 25.——*p* 1 Cor. 11. 29; chap. 13. 20.

they may have apostatized by slow degrees and continuous small sins; but the special facts are, the clearness of their knowledge and the reality of their Christian experience. Our author here utters no denial that there may be Hebrews in excusable ignorance of Christ, who are perfected and saved in their own dispensation by the very Redeemer they know not. It is the man who renounces and denounces the very Christ whose redeeming love he had experienced, whose damnation is thus irrevocable and final. **Remaineth no more sacrifice**—Rejecting this one Christ, there is no other Christ for him. There is but one atonement, and no salvation but by that one. If the apostate revert to the Levitical sacrifices, the blood of bulls and of goats avails nothing. All this is not quite saying that the apostate cannot return from his apostasy, and still avail himself of the one **sacrifice**: but for the persistent apostate there remains **no more sacrifice for sins.**

27. **But** there remains, persistently and forever, **a certain fearful looking for.** The word **certain** implies a peculiar but indescribable awfulness in the **looking for. Fearful**—Not only *terrible* to us contemplating it, but including *fear* in the apostate's heart. So fully has divine truth once pervaded his conscience that he can never be truly at ease. He may become the greatest, but he will seldom be the tranquillest, infidel in town. **Looking for**—A term suggested, perhaps, by the expectation of Jerusalem's doom as predicted by Jesus; an expectation very typical of the presentiment of doom in the conscience of the apostate. **Fiery indignation**—Literally, *a fervor of fire which will devour*; where commentators think that **fire** is personified as having an earnestness and as devouring. It is the living **fire** of divine retribution that will **devour** or consume **the adversaries,** as Jerusalem was consumed.

28. An argument from less, **Moses,** to greater, **the Son. Despised**—Nullified, reduced it to nothing. The illustration is taken from Deut. xvii, 2–7, where it is enacted that if an Israelite "hath gone and served other gods," as "sun or moon," Israel should "stone them with stones," as apostates from Jehovah, "at the mouth of two or three witnesses." Such an apostate has not only sinned, but has wholly rejected **Moses's law. Without mercy**—There was no expiating sacrifice, no executive pardon.

29. **How much sorer punishment**—As **much sorer** as the revealing **Son** was superior to the revealing Moses. The same argumentative aggravation as in ii, 3, derived from the greatness of the **Son,** then just unfolded. **Trodden under foot**—By nothing less than most guilty apostasy. The intensity of the language implies the flagrancy of the sin. **Blood of the covenant**—That blood which inaugurates and consecrates the **new covenant,** as the blood of calves and goats did the old "testament," (ix, 20.) **He was sanctified**—The expedients adopted to avoid the fact that the apostate was once truly **sanctified** are worthy of compassion. Lightfoot makes **he** refer to Christ, who was **sanctified** by his own blood! "It is worthy of remark," says Alford, "how Calvin evades the deep truth contained in the words **he was sanctified**: 'Very unworthy is it to profane the blood of Christ, which is *the source of our sanctification:* this do they who depart from the faith:'

[q] and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? **30** For we know him that hath said, [r] Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, [s] The Lord shall judge his people. **31** [t] *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. **32** But [u] call to remembrance the former days, in which, [v] after ye were illuminated, ye endured [w] a great fight of afflictions; **33** Partly, whilst ye were made [x] a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst [y] ye became companions of them that were so used. **34** For ye had compassion of me [z] in my bonds, and [a] took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing [6] in yourselves that [b] ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. **35** Cast not away therefore your confidence, [c] which hath great rec-

q Matt. 12. 31, 32; Eph. 4. 30.——*r* Deut. 32. 35; Rom. 12. 19.——*s* Deut. 32. 36; Psa. 50. 4; 135. 14.——*t* Luke 12. 5.——*u* Gal. 3. 4; 2 John 8.——*v* Chap. 6. 4.——*w* Phil. 1. 29, 30; Col. 2. 1.——*x* 1 Cor. 4. 9.

y Phil. 1. 7; 4. 14; 1 Thess. 2. 14.——*z* Phil. 1. 7; 2 Tim. 1. 16.——*a* Matt. 5. 12; Acts 5. 41; James 1. 2.——6 Or, *that ye have in yourselves*, or, *for yourselves*.——*b* Matt. 6. 20; 19. 21; Luke 12. 33; 1 Tim. 6. 19.——*c* Matt. 5. 12; 1. 32.

thus making **he was sanctified** into *we may be sanctified.*" **An unholy thing**—Literally, *a common thing;* as if the blood of the Redeemer was no more than ordinary matter. So 1 Corinthians xi, 29, "Not discerning the Lord's body." Justin Martyr says, in Greek of the Communion, "We receive these elements, not as common bread or common drink." So Acts x, 14, 15: "Call not thou common," where see note. **Done despite**—Insulted. Bloomfield says, that in every known instance this verb has a person for its object; and hence he infers the personality of **the Spirit** from this passage. **Spirit of grace**—As either coming to us from God's **grace,** or as dispensing his **grace** upon us.

30. How terrible this **punishment** we can realize when we realize who is its denouncer and author—God. **We** who have read truly **know** the speaker. **Vengeance...me**—An allusion to but not exact quotation from, Deut. xxxii, 35: "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense." But the words agree exactly with Rom. xii, 19, an indication that either our author very minutely quotes Paul or is himself Paul: for the notion that the passage is a proverbial phrase then in use is arbitrary. **Again**—Deut. xxxii, 36. **Judge**—Either to avenge or punish his **people** or Church.

31. **Fall into the hands**—David, in 2 Sam. xxiv, 14, preferred to fall rather into the hands of God than of man. The divine hands are a place of safety for the righteous; of terrible woe for the apostate and the transgressor.

32. **Call to remembrance**—Our author now inspires them to well doing by their own past noble example. **Illuminated**—By the gospel of Christ shining into your hearts. **Fight**—A palestric term; an athletic combat or series of combats. A struggle with, or consisting **of, afflictions.**

33. **Made a gazing stock**—Literally, *theatrized;* that is, exposed to shame, as if a spectacle in a public *theatre.* **Reproaches**—Affecting their reputations. **Afflictions**—Affecting their persons and goods. **Companions**—Sympathizers and associates of despised and persecuted Christians.

34. **Me in my bonds**—The more authoritative reading is, **Ye had compassion on** *the imprisoned* Christians. **Spoiling of your goods**—Ebrard applies the words to that disinheriting which even now takes place when a Jew becomes a Christian. **Ye have**—Ye even now **have** in reversion the **better substance. Enduring**—Not transient, like the earthly goods and the earthly city.

35. **Therefore**—Inasmuch as these noble antecedents show you to be heirs of a heavenly inheritance, do not **cast away** your trust and boldness, and so wane into apostasy. This true heroic **confidence,** based on faith and good works, and basis of glorious hopes,

ompense of reward. **36** [d] For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, [e] ye might receive the promise. **37** For [f] yet a little while, and [g] he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. **38** Now [h] the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. **39** But we are not of them [i] who draw back unto perdition; but of them that [k] believe to the saving of the soul.

[d] Luke 21. 19; Gal. 6. 9; chap. 12. 1.—[e] Col. 3. 24; chap. 9. 15; 1 Pet. 1. 9.—[f] Luke 18. 8; 2 Pet. 3. 9.—[g] Hab. 2. 3, 4.

[h] Rom. 1. 17; Gal. 3. 11.—[i] 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21.—[k] Acts 16. 30, 31; 1 Thess. 5. 9; 2 Thess. 2. 14.—[1] Or, *ground*, or, *confidence*.

CHAPTER XI.

NOW faith is the [1] substance of

(note xi, 1,) has a final **reward** appended to it.

36. **Patience**—A retention of a true **confidence**. **Promise**—Of the final salvation underlying their rescue from the approaching doom of their city and state.

37. **For**—Illustrating his meaning by free quotations of Habakkuk ii, 3, 4, mostly according to the Septuagint. The prophet is in vision auspicating the coming of destruction upon the Chaldean, as our author is anticipating the coming of the Roman for the destruction of Jerusalem. **Will not tarry**—Though now seeming to delay.

38. **Live by faith**—The Christian believers shall be the true survivors. Yet underlying this, in both the prophet and our author, is the divine truth that by the same faith the faithful is acceptable to God, and so heir not only of the temporal but the eternal salvation. Note on xi, 13–15. **But**—Our author has made the sentence before the **but** in the prophet, and that after, exchange places. **Draw back**—Or, **draw** *down;* that is, in shrinking back, or apostatizing. The words **any man,** as the Italics show, are not in the Greek, but are interpolated by our translators very improperly; for the proper subject of **draw back** is the just who live **by faith.** The just shall live by faith: but if he draw back my soul, etc.

39. **But,** etc.—See note on vi, 9. **Saving of the soul**—The Greek word may signify either **soul** or life. It signifies here, truly, **soul;** yet so as to include the fact, that for these Hebrews the saving of the **soul** was exemplified and made visible in the rescue of their lives from the doom of the city. For here, as in the entire next chapter, faith and its rewards are exhibited with a doubleness, as implying a heavenly and invisible salvation within the earthly and visible.

CHAPTER XI.

2. INSPIRATIONAL.—**The glories of Faith in its illustrious examples of old, xi, 1-xii, 2.**

1. **Now**—As if beginning to anticipate that too continued a strain of warning and rebuke might wear upon his hearers, our apostle now suddenly changes his tone to thrilling jubilation. From threatening penalty for *unbelief* he rises into a lofty peal of exultation over the glories of *faith.* This **faith** is not solely ground of safety; it is an inspiration to all sublime moral heroism. It is the basis within the soul of all divine hopes and of all heroic communion with higher things above the **things** of merely animal sense. This he illustrates by a long line of glorious examples in the sacred record from the creation to the Christian era. All this assumes and affirms that the true Christian **faith** is the heir and real continuance of that old **faith,** and that the now faithful Hebrews will be heirs of the faithful of all ages, and will form a real modern extension of the ancient line of faithful heroes. It is one of the many illustrations in Hebrews of what has been called Paul's habit of "going off at a word," (and a proof of his authorship of this book,) that this sublime pæan is hung upon the word **faith,** in x, 38, where it occurs in Paul's favourite formula of justification by faith. He now proceeds to show that faith is not only justifying but inspiring, ennobling, and exalting to the soul. We may further add, that the deduction of this heroic evolution of faith from the saving faith of x, 38,

things hoped for, the evidence [a]of things not seen. **2** For [b]by it

a Rom. 8. 24, 25; 2 Cor. 4. 18; 5. 7.——*b* Verse 39.

amply refutes the preposterous pretence of some German expositors, (as Lünemann,) that the idea of faith in this epistle is different from Paul's idea. Nothing is clearer than that, with Paul, faith is not only the mainspring of our salvation, but of our sanctification, and of all our Christian graces, virtues, and heroisms. Nowhere else, indeed, has he so fully expanded that view as here; and so we readily believe that it is by him that it is here expanded. **Is**—The present proposition is not intended as a complete definition of **faith**; but is such a statement or modified definition as suits our author's design of showing how **faith** is the quickening inspiration of lofty enterprise. **Substance**—The Greek word (compounded of *ὑπο*, *under*, and *στασις*, *standing*) signifies something that *stands under* an overlying object. Originally and literally, it signifies a basis, foundation, substratum. Our word **substance,** (derived from the Latin *sub*, under, and *stans*, standing,) has the same etymology, and etymologically the same meaning, for *substance* is a substratum, or base, underlying its properties. Hence our translators, as many scholars, here put the word **substance.** So Chrysostom says, "For since things are to *hope* unsubstantiated, **faith** grants to them a **substance**; or rather, does not so much *grant*, as be itself their **substance,** or existence." But the true force of the writer's proposition is, we think, best expressed by the stricter meaning of the word *basis*, or *foundation.* The whole current of the chapter shows that what he means is, that **faith** is within the soul the true subjective *foundation* of all subjective divine hopes and all supermundane heroisms. Hope, and the **things** held within the mental conception as things **hoped for,** have for their subjective basis **faith**; that power by which all that is transcendent and heroic is embraced in the mind. To translate the word *confidence*, as Lünemann, Delitzsch, and Alford do, is very flat. By that translation we have the truism that **faith is** *confidence*, just as *confidence* is **faith**; which are mere identical propositions. Indeed, *faith* and con*fidence* are the same word in different languages; so that we have *faith is faith.* **Things hoped for** are viewed subjectively, as **things** within the hoping mind; and within the same mind their subjective basis is **faith.** The soul is a mirror in which are the images of **faith** as basis, and **things hoped for** as superstructure. **Things hoped for** is emphatic, suggesting the inspiring power of immortal and unlimited prospectives within our conception. **Evidence**—Rather, *demonstration*, as Alford and others. **Things not seen** are like a geometrical diagram, planting a *demonstration* of themselves in the perceiving mind. That *demonstration* is received and realized by the elevated **faith** faculty, or predisposition, and is itself a **faith** forever. And the more vivid the demonstration the more realizing the **faith,** and the more heroic the soul in the ascending direction. **Things not seen,** are the realities of God and his universe outside the visible world, which are revealed to our higher intuitions by nature, by divine manifestation, or by the written record. The animal man, the sensualist, never thinks of or truly embraces these truths. The worldly forget them. The atheist denies them. And these are all incapable of that spiritual heroism recorded of the ancient worthies.

There is an obvious parallelism in the clauses **substance of things hoped for—evidence of things not seen.** There *appears*, also, to be an anti-climax. The former clause is more impressive, and especially more impressive for the author's inspiring purpose, than the latter. We would explain this by saying that the last is epexegetical, or explanatory; being, as it were, its confirmatory echo. **Faith** *is the subjective prop of our hopes by being the realization of the great Unseen.* How feeble a rendering *confidence* is of the word for **substance,** *ὑπόστασις*, (*hypostasis,*) and

the elders obtained a good report. **3** Through faith we understand that [c]the worlds were framed by

c Gen. 1. 1; Psa. 33. 6; John 1. 3; chap. 1. 2; 2 Pet. 3. 5.

how uniformly it means the *underlay*, or *basis* of *confidence*, or other thing, is a point worthy further illustration. Thus (taking several examples in Robinson's Greek Testament Lexicon) a classical author speaks of the *hypostasis* (*basis-energy*) of the soul under endurance of torments; just as a horseman speaks of the "bottom," or basal strength, of his steed. Another says, "all the *hypostasis* (underlying vigour) of the bowels." Another, of "the appearance of wealth, but not the *hypostasis*," (underlying reality.) So Paul (2 Cor. xi, 17) speaks of "this *hypostasis*, or basis of our boasting." So (Heb. x, 35) the beginning of our self-basing in Christ. So, also, several passages adduced from the Septuagint by Whitby, and feebly rendered by him *confidence*, or *expectation*. In Ruth i, 12 it is asked, Is there to me any *basis* of a husband? Ezek. xix, 5: *All* her *basis* was lost. Psalm lxxxix, 47: All my *basis* is from thee. In all these cases is meant rather the subjective underlay of a subjective confidence than the confidence itself.

2. **For**—In proof of its high inspiring power is the whole line of heroic examples. Not **by it**, as an instrument, but rather *in* **it**, as a state or condition. It was as *in* a frame or atmosphere of **faith** that the worthies were heroes. Its air was an exhilaration and a tonic. **The elders**—The men of the olden time, our illustrious spiritual ancestry. **Obtained a good report**—Literally, *were well witnessed to*—received a noble testimony; that is, from God, as **Abel** and **Enoch**, in verses 4 and 5. The *witness* to them was immediate and direct; and it is also in the whole line verified by the Old Testament record.

3. **Through faith**—As instrument, or means. **We**—Lünemann justly notes, that while this example commences the series with the creation, it does not form one example in the line of **elders**; for it is **we** who entertain this **faith**, and not **the elders** alone, though, perhaps, the **we** is inclusive of **the elders.** The proper reasons why our author begins with this instance are: 1. That it is at the chronological beginning of the series, namely, at the very creation itself: and, 2. It exemplifies the last clause of the definition; it shows how **faith** is *demonstration* of the unseen, of the supermundane. What this **faith** is, **we** know, for **we** all entertain it. **We understand**—The Greek verb expresses action of the higher, or *intuitive*, faculties of man, the spirit; that is, **we** *intuitize*. This intuitive faculty sees the invisible truth by direct looking at it, as the eye sees a visible object. See note on 1 Thess. v, 23. **Were framed**—Were brought to completion from crude conditions. The word does not designate absolute *creation from nothing*, but an adjusting of parts and a construction of a symmetrical whole. **By the word of God**—By the divine command, as in the first chapter of Genesis—a figurative expression for the divine energy in action. There is here no reference to the personal Word, nor to the mediation of the Son in the creation, as in i, 2, but an affirmation that God is maker. **So that**—Rather, *to the end that*. God's word, or active energy, **framed . . . the worlds** purposely, **so that** the visible sprung not from things appearing. **Things which are seen**—The completed system of definite things making up the visible world. Or, as the singular is used in the Greek, *το βλεπωμενον*, literally, *the seen, the visible*, it means the whole system taken as a complex unit. **Things that do appear**—The difference between the **seen**, or the *visible*, and the **appear**, or *apparent*, is, that the former is considered as perceived by only the one sense of *sight*, the latter by any sense or perceptive power; and if by any perceptive power, divine as well as human, then the *non-apparent* would be about equivalent to the

faith [d] Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead [e 2] yet speaketh. **5** By faith

d Gen. 4. 4; 1 John 3. 12.—*e* Gen. 4. 10; Matt. 23. 35; chap. 12. 24.—2 Or, *is yet spoken of.*

non-existent; for what omniscience cannot perceive must be non-existent. It is disputed whether the **not** connects with **made,** so as to say that the *visible* was not **made,** or did **not** come from the *apparents,* or with **appear,** so as to say that the *visible* came from the *non-apparents.* Though the order of the Greek words suggests the former, yet Stuart and Delitzsch ably maintain, by good Greek precedents, the latter. And rendering it *the visible system was made from non-apparents,* the *non-apparents* Delitzsch holds to be the creative divine powers and forces. In that case the meaning would be, that creation is *by* omnipotence *out of* nothing. Stuart, however, ingeniously suggests, that to say that the world was made "out of nothing," seems to imply that nothing was a something out of which it was made, and he concludes that our author expresses the thought correctly when he says, that the visible was not made out of perceptible antecedents, or, in other words, previous materials. But, note, 1. The force of the word **framed,** meaning *constructed, put together,* indicates that our author is describing *formation* of **worlds,** not origination of their substance. He is speaking of shaping materials into organisms, not bringing the materials into existence from non-existence. 2. The Greek word for **made** signifies *to begin to exist, to become, to take existence;* but to begin to exist as a **framed** system. We have, then, the rendering: *the worlds were framed so that the visible system came into existence from non-apparents.* It is, then, of the *organizing of the visible system* that our writer is speaking. And what are the non-apparents from which it took organic existence? 3. If we rightly understand, they are the primitive elements—the *chaos* of Genesis. Philosophers are generally agreed that the atoms of which things consist, and **the worlds were framed,** are themselves imperceptible to any human sense. They are, individually, so minute that no eye and no magnifying power can reach them. Nobody ever saw the *atom,* though every body believes its existence. We see it by the eye, not of sense, but of intuitive reason. That is, *by faith we intuitize that the worlds were organized, so that the visible system took organic form from imperceptible elements.*

4. **Abel**—Passing in significant silence the first of the human race, Adam, and the first born of the race, Cain, our author finds in the second born, **Abel,** the first decisive instance of heroic **faith. More excellent sacrifice**—Literally, *a more sacrifice;* it was more truly an actual offering than Cain's, because offered in **faith. By which,** may by its gender be referred to **faith** or to **sacrifice.** Lünemann and Alford refer it to the former; but **by faith...by which** makes a very awkward structure of sentence. The true meaning seems to be, that his faithful **sacrifice** it was which **obtained witness** from God, exhibitited in the divine "respect" thereto. Genesis iv, 4. **God testifying**—The Septuagint says, (Gen. iv, 4,) "And God looked upon Abel and upon his gifts." **Yet** is not a designation of time, but signifies *notwithstanding,* and points the antithesis that, though **dead,** he nevertheless **speaks.** But the permanent present tense of **speaks** expresses the full idea that Abel is forever speaking. What he **speaks** is not here said. In xii, 24, our author, in allusion to Genesis iv, 10, makes the **blood of Abel** speak terrible things; but here, by his **faith** and **sacrifice** Abel speaks something glorious; namely, he tells us through all ages that **faith,** evidenced by good works, obtains favour and testimony from God. He is the first memorable example that piety and God, as against wickedness, are on the same side.

[f] Enoch was [g] translated that he should not see death; [h] and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. **6** But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him:* for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. **7** By faith [i] Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet,

f Genesis 5. 22, 24.—*g* 2 Kings 2. 11; Psalm 89. 48.

h 2 Kings 2. 16, 17; Jer. 36. 26; Rev. 11. 9, 12.
i Gen. 6. 13, 22.

5. Example of **Enoch. Translated**—Transferred, like Elijah, (2 Kings ii, 11.) bodily from earth to heaven. **That**—In order **that.** It was the divine purpose **that** Enoch should be in the patriarchal dispensation the example of the immortality of man and the glorification of the faithful. So was Elijah in the Mosaic dispensation; and, crowning all, Christ in his own dispensation. So the pre-Christian writer, Sirach, says, (xliv, 16,) "Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated, an example of repentance to the generations." And, again, (xlix, 14.) "Upon the earth was no man created like Enoch; for he was even taken up from the earth." And Josephus says, "He went to the divinity." **That**—In order **that;** expressive of the divine purpose. **See death**—Experience **death,** Luke ii, 26. He passed thus the glorious resurrection "change" (note on 1 Cor. xv, 51) without passing through the agony of dissolution. His spirit dwelt not in paradise; but both body and spirit ascended to the highest heaven. **Not found**—No human search on earth could discover him. So Livy says of Romulus, "Nor then was Romulus on earth." **He had this testimony**—That is, it stands testified, **before his translation,** in the Genesis history, (Genesis v, 24,) that he "walked with," that is, **pleased, God.**

6. **But**—This testimony could not have been given to Enoch **without faith. For**—A universal reason, alike for Enoch and for us. **Impossible**—For without **faith** on our part there can be no mutual communion with God. In order to "walk with God" a man must have sympathy, love, and **faith** towards God. **Cometh to God**—To worship, as the Israelites came into his presence in the sanctuary. Compare vii, 25; x, 1. **He is**—An atheist cannot adore God. God's admitted existence is the first condition of possible worship. And **faith** in the existence of the true God is necessary to true worship. He may be, indeed, imperfectly apprehended; the conception may be limited and finite. Nevertheless, he must be held by **faith** to be a supreme Being, who is on the side of truth and righteousness. He is felt to be the personal "power without us," and above us, "that makes for righteousness." As such this holy line of witnesses, running adown the pages of sacred history, realized God in their "faith." And this realization of a holy Supreme it was that distinguishes them from idolaters of all lands and ages, and from atheists. By this **faith** they aspired to communion with and likeness to a righteous God, and God accepted their **faith,** however imperfect, "for righteousness." He granted them his favour, communed with them by his Spirit, revealed himself by a whole series of supernatural manifestations, and prepared their race for the bringing forth of his Son in due time. **A rewarder**—They believed that inestimable blessings would descend from the friendship of the Holy God. **Diligently seek him**—The expressive Greek verb, ἐκζητεῖν, is, *seek him out from;* that is, *from* all idolatries, atheisms, and wickednesses. God has his witness in every human heart; yet through that witness must He be *sought out.*

7. Example of **Noah. Not seen**—An allusion to verse 1. **Things not seen,** are often things not **hoped for,** but the reverse. **As yet**—But were soon to be **seen;** in this a striking parallel of our unseen future of death, resurrection, judgment, and eternity. Well for us if our **faith** in those things

[j] moved with fear, [k] prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of [l] the righteousness which is by faith. **8** By faith [m] Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance,

j Or, *being wary.*—*k* 1 Pet. 3. 20.—*l* Rom. 3. 22; 4. 13; Phil. 3. 9.—*m* Gen. 12. 1, 4; Acts 7. 2–4.

not seen as yet results, like Noah's, in our salvation. **Moved with fear**—A reverent and faithful **fear** produced by the warning, and his **faith** therein. The word **which**, may be grammatically referred either to **salvation, ark,** or **faith.** Most modern commentators refer it to **faith.** Note on verse 4. **Condemned the world**—Not as judge but as witness, exhibiting proof that they were guilty in not taking warning, and trusting by **faith** in God. Compare Matthew xii, 41, 42; Luke xi, 31, 32; Rom. ii, 27. They loved their sins and disbelieved God. It is a solemn spectacle to see one man right and all the rest of **the world** wrong. Let no man depend upon numbers for salvation. God is greater than **the world. Righteousness ... by faith**—The doctrine of Paul, of Luther, and of Wesley. We become friends with God by entire trust in God. And the passage is a remarkable occult proof of Pauline authorship; showing Paul as assuming that his words are now well understood from his former treatment of that subject.

8. Example of **Abraham.** As the great typical example of faith, both with Jewish writers (note on Gal. iii, 6) and St. Paul, Abraham with Sarah fills a long paragraph, 8–20. And the similarity of the treatment here is good proof that Paul's idea of faith is still the same, and this epistle by his hand. **Called**—A well supported reading in the Greek would read **Abraham** *the* **called.** And that reading would mean, according to Delitzsch, Abraham the well known, or historically illustrious as *the* **called**—a very suitable and significant meaning. But Alford, in accordance with the old Greek commentators, interprets it the man who obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. **9** By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, [n] dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, [o] the heirs with him of the same promise: **10** For he looked for [p] a city which hath foundations,

n Gen. 12. 8; 13. 3, 18; 18. 1, 9.—*o* Chap. 6. 17. *p* Chap. 12. 22; 13. 14.

previously was **called** Abram, and was subsequently named Abraham. The reading, however, without the article, is, probably, the true one, and the reference is to "the *call* of Abraham." **Go out into a place**—Modern research suggests the probability that Abraham's *going out* was part of a great western movement of the Asiatic peoples. But Abraham's great peculiarity was, that he went under divine guidance, about to plant a special race in a special spot for a future divine history. By his faithfulness he became the founder of that race whose history stands alone in the history of the world. **Went out**—As Noah launched forth upon the unknown waters, so Abraham started forth into unknown lands. So the man of **faith** looks onward and upward to an unknown but blessed home.

9. **A strange**—That is, as somebody else's, and not his own, **country**; though by divine promise most truly his own. **Tabernacles**—That is, *tents;* the abodes of wanderers and strangers, the striking image of transitory residence. **Same promise**—And same **faith,** as in verse 21.

10. **For**—Reason for his adventurous movement; he had a higher land in view, which regulated his course in this earthly land. **A city**—Unlike this rural earthly land. **Foundations**—Unlike these *tents,* so soon to be taken up, and so easily blown away. The **city** was not, as Grotius understood, the future earthly Jerusalem; but that higher and heavenly Jerusalem, the antitype of the lower. See note on Gal. iv, 22 and 26. **Builder**—Τεχνίτης, *artist,* or *architect.* Herbert Spencer ridicules feebly the doctrine of *creation* by divine mind and power;

[q] whose builder and maker *is* God. **11** Through faith also [r] Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and [s] was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him [t] faithful who had promised. **12** Therefore sprang there even of one, and [u] him as good as dead, [v] *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. **13** These all died [4] in faith, [w] not having received the promises, but [x] having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and [y] confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. **14** For they that say such things [z] declare plainly that they seek a country. **15** And

q Chap. 3. 4; Rev. 21. 2, 10.—*r* Gen. 17. 19; 18. 11, 14; 21. 2.—*s* Luke 1. 36.—*t* Rom. 4. 21; chap. 10. 23.—*u* Rom. 4. 19.—*v* Gen. 22. 17; Rom. 4. 18.

4 Greek, *according to faith.*—*w* Ver. 39.—*x* Ver. 27; John 8. 56.—*y* Gen. 23. 4; 47. 9; 1 Chron. 29. 15; Psa. 39. 12; 119. 19; 1 Pet. 1. 17; 2. 11.—*z* Chap. 13. 14.

styling it, wittily, as he seems to think, "the carpenter theory of creation," as if a carpenter were a very low thing. Yet poetry, oratory, and the Bible, delight to style God the architect, **builder**, and **maker**, of the worlds.

11. **Herself**—Through whom it was all along assumed that the promise was to become effected. Or, as some understand it, **herself**, who was formerly barren; or, as others, **herself**, who was at first faithless. We prefer the first, though we find it unsuggested by any commentator. **Past age**—That is, of child bearing. Notes on iv, 16, 17.

12. **Therefore sprang there**—And now comes the point that renders these events and characters most illustrious to every Hebrew memory. From this miraculous point **sprang** his chosen race. The Messianic race, like the Messiah himself, had a supernatural birth. Abraham *was* that Christ might *be;* and Sarah was the ancestress of the blessed mother of Jesus. **Even of one**—From one fountain head, **Abraham**, all the diverging streams of the tribes **sprang. Dead**—And so from a divinely energized source. Israel was miracle-born. Every Hebrew read in the narrative proof that he was a son of God. The human race was born from Adam; again from Noah; the Jewish race from energized Abraham. **Multitude**—Forming the twelve tribes, and even now spread through all the earth. **Stars...sand**—The most natural images in primitive times of a number beyond enumeration. So in old Herodotus, the oracle is made to say, "I know the number of the sand and the measures of the sea." And so God said to Abraham, (Gen. xxii, 17,) "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore."

13. **These all died in faith**—They not only lived faithful lives, but **in** (not *by*) **faith they died.** The fact that they *saw* not the fulfilled **promises** shook not their final **faith.** From their dying beds they looked forward to the heavenly **country.** To the **all,** here, some commentators note Enoch as an "exception," who did not die. Others say, **all** who really **died, died** in faith. Perhaps the **all,** however, refers only to Abraham's descendants, of whom alone 12–16 seems to speak. **Received** (the fulfilment of) **the promises. Seen them afar off**—As a ship's company descry a distant lighthouse: or as Moses, from the summit of Nebo, surveyed the distant hills and plains, and cities and rivers, of the land to which he was heir, but must never in life possess. **Embraced**—Or, saluted them. So Xenophon's army of the ten thousand, when they arrived at the Euxine, which was to terminate their wilderness wandering, shouted — the first giving the word to all the rest— "Thalatta! thalatta!" *the sea, the sea.* **Pilgrims on the earth**—Having a land in heaven, of which this promised land was type and earnest.

14. **Say such things**—Confess themselves **pilgrims on...earth. A country**—A home-land, which, ceasing to be nomads and immigrants, they can call "my country." The **pilgrim** here longs for the **country** of the resurrection.

truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. **16** But now they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed [a]to be called their God: for [b]he hath prepared for them a city. **17** By faith [c]Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises [d]offered up his only begotten *son*, **18** [5]Of whom it was said, [e]That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: **19** Accounting that God [f]*was* able to

[a] Exod. 3. 6, 15; Matt. 22. 32; Acts 7. 32.——[b] Phil. 3. 20; chap. 13. 14.——[c] Gen. 22. 1, 9.

[d] James 2. 21.——[5] Or, *To.*——[e] Gen. 21. 12; Rom. 9. 7.——[f] Rom. 4. 17, 19, 21.

15. **Mindful of that country**—If the emigrating Abraham had dropped his **faith**, and given up the **promises** as to Canaan, he could have gone back to Chaldea at any chosen time. He would then have resigned the future earthly Jerusalem, the foundership of the Old Testament dispensation, and the fatherhood of the Messiah. He and his might have gone into the idolatry of the Chaldeans and have been forgotten.

16. **Now**—In accepting the inheritance of Canaan, they read a title clear to **a better...a heavenly country.** And outside of the fleshly Israel there have been faithful souls belonging to the true Israel. Anaxagoras, the Athenian philosopher, (as Laertius tells us,) being asked, "Care you not for your country?" replied, "Speak gently, for I care ardently for *my* country," pointing towards heaven. And Plato said, "Man is a heavenly plant, not an earthly." **God is not ashamed**—The God of the universe condescends to be God to these immigrant **pilgrims.** All the stars of limitless astronomy, lifeless things as they are, are not as dear to God as one faithful human soul. **Their God**—His title of honour is not merely that he *was*, but that he ever *is*, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **For**—In proof that he is specially their God. **Prepared . . . a city**—The heavenly counterpart of which the earthly is type and earnest.

17. **Abraham,** the father and founder, is still continued. Our author has, in previous verses, shown how by faith of Abraham Israel received miraculous origin. But a later crisis came. It seemed as if by God's command the miracle-born race was to be cut off by the knife of its founder. By the sacrifice of Isaac the thread was to be severed, and in Isaac all Israel must die. But as Isaac's birth was **in a figure** an incarnation, so his rescue from the sacrificial knife was **in a figure** a resurrection. **Tried**—*Tempted*, in the sense of a divine desire that he should prove faithful upon trial. Not that God needs proof to know what he would do; but **faith** exists for works and self-evidence, by manifestation to the world. Man is by nature not only a reflective, but an active being. Faith is in the heart, that it may resist evil, work good, and so evolve a glorious history. Probation is the scene for faith to act itself out in, and prove its own genuineness before the Infinite, and to the finite. **Only begotten**—Since Ishmael was counted for nothing, as being of ignoble birth, and outside the promises.

18. **In Isaac**—On this phrase Alford notes: "'Three ways,' says Delitzsch, 'of interpreting this are possible—1. After Isaac shall thy seed be named; 2. In, through, of, Isaac shall seed be called into being to thee; 3. In Isaac shall seed be named to thee; that is, in or through him shall it come that a seed of Abraham shall be possible.' Then he puts aside the first, seeing that only once is the seed of Abraham called Isaac, [Amos vii, 9;] and the second, seeing that the Hebrew word for *call* [though sometimes bearing the meaning, see Isa. xli, 4] never so absolutely signifies 'to call into existence,' as it must on that interpretation; and he prefers the third: in Isaac, through and in descent from him, shall thy seed be called thy seed: that is, only Isaac's descendants shall be known as Abraham's seed."

19. **Accounting**—What, it may be asked, was the real excellence of Abra-

raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him

o Genesis

ham's celebrated **faith**? Was it that he accepted a sensible phenomenon claiming to be Jehovah as a real theophany, a God made manifest? That might be the same credulity in supernatural appearances as we at the present day contemn. Or was it, that being firmly sure that it was God who commanded, he unflinchingly obeyed? But then who would not, if he was sure that the true Infinite commanded, obey? We may reply: 1. That Abraham first had turned away from an idolatrous world in Chaldea, and then had sought for the true and holy God, as he is in truth. In so doing he obeyed the highest aspirations of the human spirit. He was, therefore, eminently *right*, and his righteousness was a seeking, aspiring, and holy **faith**. 2. To that holy **faith**, in the midst of a faithless world, God did supernaturally respond. Not merely, though clearly, by the visible phenomenon, but also by the witness of his Spirit. That Spirit produced in Abraham that **faith** which is *demonstration* (see our note on verse 1) of the holy truth. Abraham, then, had that *knowing* of God possessed by the spiritual intuitions, which is clear and sure as a geometrical demonstration is to the pure intellect. If any enthusiast at the present day, sane or insane, mistakenly assumes to be similarly authorized by God, and proceeds to slaughter his son, he must bear the consequences of his own mistake. He can no more hold the Abrahamic example responsible for his act than a man who, fancying himself a public executioner, hangs his son, could hold the law of capital punishment responsible. He can no more plead Abraham's example than a modern assailant of our national existence can plead Washington's example for being "a rebel." 3. With the Holy One, and with his righteousness, truth, and holiness, the heart of Abraham rose in sympathy. Between the Holy and the holy there were communion and oneness. That was high and holy faith. 4. When God's severe command came, in a figure. **20** By faith [s] Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning

27. 27, 39.

though it cut the father's sensibilities, and seemed to cut asunder God's promises, and to cut off the holy seed, he said that God was true and right, and that all these evil seemings were but seemings. The glow of faith rose above even the shrinkings of nature. Hence was this narrative recorded for our ensample. There is a faithful and there is a faithless people. May our soul be with God, and all the human followers of God, the faithful of whom Abel was first instance, and Abraham the great exemplar. **God was able**—And, therefore, the right result was secure. **In a figure**—So divine a rescue from virtual death was a **figure** of a literal resurrection. So that, as Christ's incarnation was typified in Isaac's birth, his resurrection was typified in Isaac's rescue from death.

There is good reason to believe that a resurrection in its debased form, as held in Chaldea, was known to Abraham. So mingled was the idea with idolatrous conceptions as to be cautiously left in the background in the Abrahamic creed, rather shadowed by earthly types and implications than boldly expressed. The doctrine of the only true God came to the front, and a reliant trust in him was cherished that his favour was assurance of all good, present and future, reflected in the present. The fact that God was Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's God, insured by gracious implication their future existence.

20. **Concerning things to come**—It is not quite true that prophets first arose in the later history of Israel. For Abraham was "a prophet." Gen. xx, 7. The recorded paternal blessings of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph were prophecies, and we know not how many unrecorded prophecies they uttered. The lineal family—nay, we may say the lineal race—was for ages susceptible to presentiment and predictive frames. Their natural temperament, therefore, was a basis of possibility of divine revelation. The supernatural-

things to come. **21** By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, [h] blessed both the sons of Joseph; and [i] worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff. **22** By faith [k] Joseph, when he died, [6] made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave command-

h Gen. 48. 5, 16, 20.—*i* Gen. 47. 31.—*k* Gen. 50. 24, 25; Exod. 13. 19.—6 Or, *remembered.*

istic person is often unattractive, and not good or wise; but when wise and good, a lofty character may therefrom arise.

21. **When he was a dying**—Our author blends two successive scenes in Jacob's history: Gen. xlvii, 28–31, and xlviii, 8–14. In the former, Jacob, feeling that he was in **a dying** condition, called for Joseph, and exacted from him an oath to convey his body, when dead, to Canaan. Then it is added, "Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." It is this phrase which our author, in accordance with the Septuagint, interprets, that he "worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff," verse 21. The reason of this discrepancy is this. The same Hebrew word, according as it is differently vowelled, may read either **staff** or *bed.* By the vowel points of our present Hebrew Bibles (which points were invented and inserted in the fifth century of our era) it reads as in the English translation. But our author, probably correctly, follows the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew made two hundred and fifty years before Christ. Stuart plausibly argues that the eastern bed has no "head," and forcibly adds that no such phrase as *bed's head* occurs in the Old Testament. Jacob, having obtained his oath from Joseph, devoutly thanked God, feebly standing, as an old man, and **leaning upon the top of his staff.** Our author connects this event with the dying blessing of his sons by Jacob, because the whole formed one **dying** prophecy of Israel's future in Canaan.

22. Example of **Joseph. When he died**—The patriarchs' prophetic **faith** grew vivid on their death bed, so that in time a series of predictions accumulated

ment concerning his bones. **23** By faith [l] Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's [m] commandment. **24** By faith [n] Moses, when he was come to years, refused to

l Exod. 2. 2; Acts 7. 20.—*m* Exod. 1. 16, 22. *n* Exod. 2. 10, 11.

in the Abrahamic family, all pointing to the promised land, where, according to the Abrahamic promise, all the nations were to be blessed in Abraham and his "seed." Truly, though we know not how distinctly, all this pointed to the chosen "Seed," the Messiah. **Made mention of the departing**—The great Israelite-Egyptian statesman held the **faith** of his fathers, and predicted the Canaanite future. **Commandment**—Thereby giving his faith a tangible form.

23–29. Example of **Moses.** An age of prophetic silence and national suffering intervenes, when **faith** again revives in Moses, initiated by the **faith** of his parents. And this was a new era of **faith,** when, from merely *predicting,* the illustrious leader, Moses, proceeded to *take possession* of the Palestinian inheritance. **Faith** went forth in heroic enterprise, and a new dispensation was founded, second in greatness only to the advent of the Messiah. And, as it were in one list, our author gathers under Moses all the heroic examples until the conquest of Canaan.

23. **Parents**—The word is literally in the masculine—*fathers:* and Bengel conjectures that the hiding was really done by his father Amram, and his paternal grandfather, (not his maternal, who was Levi himself, but his paternal,) Kohath: and Kohath was living at Moses's birth. But Wetstein has abundantly shown that *fathers* was often a Greek term for *parents.* **Were not afraid**—So but that they braved **the king's commandment** to destroy all the male children.

24. **Refused**—Not, probably, by any definite act of *refusal,* but by preferring the cause and the company of the bondsmen over those of the courtiers

be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; **25** [o] Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; **26** Esteeming [p] the reproach [7] of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto [q] the recompense of the reward. **27** By faith [r] he forsook Egypt, not fearing the

o Psa. 84. 10.— *p* Chapter 13. 13.—7 Or, *for Christ.*

q Chap. 10. 35.— *r* Exod. 10. 28, 29; 12. 37; 13. 17, 18.

25. **Choosing**—Our author expresses Moses's choice in very New Testament terms; designedly, for it is as an example to his Hebrew fellow-Christians that he pictures the great founder of Hebraism. These, too, had to desert the popular and government favour, *to suffer* rather than **enjoy for a season.** In **choosing** Christian **faith** rather than Judaism, they are *the* true followers of Moses.

26. **Reproach of Christ**—Still more impressive use of Christian terms. Not appreciating the author's purpose in this, the commentators are at a loss to decide why Moses should be said to suffer the **reproach of Christ.** Our author means to tell his wavering Hebrews that their firm adherence to the despised Christ is essentially identical with the **faith,** and choice, and suffering, of Moses. It was truly for a Messiah to come that Moses suffered; it was for the Messiah that has come that his Hebrews are called to suffer. Hence, in xiii, 13, he applies the same expression to them. Compare, also, 2 Cor. i, 5, and Col. i, 24. **Reward**—Moses, as the Hebrew brethren should, preferred the divine favour and eternal blessedness to royal rank. Bloomfield, quoting Doddridge, well says: "Surely that reward could not be *temporal grandeur*, which he might have had with much greater security in Egypt."

27. **Forsook Egypt**—Not only declined the royal adoption and preferred his kindred, but fully and finally left the land of Pharaoh. A large majority of commentators, including Delitzsch, Lünemann, and Alford, refer this **forsook** to Moses' flight from Egypt to Midian, (Exod. ii, 11–15,) when menaced by Pharaoh for killing an Egyptian. By that rendering the great fact of Moses's life is left unmentioned, and an act of fear and flight, rather than heroic **faith,** is selected. Pharaoh, we are told, "sought to slay Moses, but Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh." He remained long years concealed in Midian, until, at last, Jehovah there gave him his call to his great mission. To say of this event that it was divine "faith," "not fearing the wrath of the king," contradicts the face and the substance of the sacred narrative, which presents it as a long process of fear, flight, concealment, and inaction, the dim and faithless period of Moses's life. For that interpretation, however, Lünemann argues: 1. To make **forsook** designate the exodus of Israel from Egypt violates the chronological order of the series of events, for that exodus really came after the passover. Ver. 28. 2. The word **forsook** (*κατέλιπεν, left*) is too slight to express so great a movement as the exodus. 3. That the exodus after xii, 31 was commanded by Pharaoh, and did not admit "fearing the wrath of the king." To the *first* we reply, that the exodus, as designated by **forsook,** is the great fact, under which the passover and the passage of the sea are subordinate parts, and so are, with propriety, later mentioned. To the *second*, that **refused,** verse 24, and **forsook,** are co-ordinate. The whole statement in regard to Moses is a series of rejections and overthrows of Egypt, which our author designs to be paralleled by his Hebrews' rejection and overthrow of Jerusalem and Judaism. Moses refused his sonship to Pharaoh's daughter; he abandoned Egypt; he established the passover under which Egypt's firstborn were slain; he passed the sea in which Egypt's royalty and power were submerged. To the *third* we answer, that this **forsook** includes the whole movement from Exodus iii to the complete clearance from Egypt at end of Exod. xv. Pharaoh's order in Exod. xii, 31 was but an incident in the great **wrath**

wrath of the king: for he endured, as [s] seeing him who is invisible. **28** Through faith [t] he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. **29** By faith [u] they passed through the Red Sea as by dry *land:* which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. **30** By faith [v] the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. **31** By faith [w] the harlot Rahab perished not with them [8] that believed not, when [x] she had received the spies with peace. **32** And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of [y] Gideon, and *of* [z] Barak, and *of* [a] Samson, and *of* [b] Jephthah; *of* [c] David also, and

[s] Ver. 13.—[t] Exod. 12. 21, &c.—[u] Exod. 14. 22, 29.—[v] Josh. 6. 20.—[w] Josh. 6. 23; James 2. 25.—[8] Or, *that were disobedient.*

[x] Josh. 2. 1.—[y] Judg. 6. 11.—[z] Judg. 4. 6. —[a] Judg. 13. 24.—[b] Judg. 11. 1 12. 7.—[c] 1 Sam. 16. 1, 13; 17. 45.

of the king which Moses long braved in accomplishing the exodus. How typical is this whole picture of the exodus of the Christian Hebrews going out from the temple worship at Jerusalem, and abandoning ritual, city, and state to their approaching overthrow! **Him who is invisible**—A higher king than Pharaoh. **Seeing...invisible**—Expresses the fact of **faith** as above sight.

28. **Passover**—See our notes on Matt. xxvi, 2, and 26–29. **Kept**—Literally, *has made*, or established; the term implying the permanency of the institution. Yet the Greek word was habitually used to designate the *keeping*, or celebration, of the passover. **Sprinkling of blood**—Upon the posts and lintels of the Hebrew doors. **He**—The angel of Jehovah.

29. **They**—The Israelites under Moses, implied but not expressed. **Drowned**—*Were swallowed down*, as if the sea were a sea monster to them.

30. Thus far we have only traced the leaving of Egypt. The whole desert history is omitted. On the borders of Canaan two instances are selected. One is the conquering **faith** of Israel at Jericho, premonitory of final possession; the other, the repentant faith of a pagan courtezan, symbol of Canaan's submission, and encouragement to **faith** for deepest sinners of all ages. **Jericho**—The great stronghold on the Canaanite side of Jordan. **Fell down**—Man blew the trumpets, and God wrought the overthrow. The act of God was consequent upon the **faith** of man. Very concisely it is said, **by faith the walls...fell. Seven days**—A week of persistent **faith** in Israel.

31. **Harlot**—Styled an *innkeeper* in the Chaldee paraphrase, and in the Arabic translation. And this interpretation has been followed by some commentators, including Adam Clarke. But both the Hebrew word and this Greek term, used also by St. James, (as also abundantly by Clement of Rome in his epistle,) are unequivocally **harlot.** There is no reasonable doubt that she belonged to a class of courtezans consecrated to Ashtaroth, the goddess of impure love. This obscene idolatry had its centre in Phœnician Sidon, and spread itself through Canaan during the residence of Israel in Egypt. It took its origin in adoration of the generative power of nature, implying a worship of the sun as source of generation, and of his queen, the moon. It had its stately houses of abode, where licentiousness was consecrated as a religious rite. It induced the wandering traveller to enter, furnishing both refuge and license. Hence, doubtless, Rahab was both *hostess* and **harlot.** Hers was a repentant faith in Jehovah, according to her own words, (Josh. ii, 11,) "Jehovah your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." She **perished not** in the terrible destruction of Jericho; she married a Hebrew, became mother of Boaz, and ancestress of Jesus. Note on Matt. i, 2. **With peace**—Perhaps by a welcoming *salam* preparatory to her forsaking the base rites of Ashtaroth and becoming a pure worshipper of Jehovah.

32. **More say**—After the arrival in Canaan the **cloud of witnesses** becomes too dense to particularize, and

[d] Samuel, and *of* the prophets: **33** Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, [e] obtained promises, [f] stopped the mouths of lions, **34** [g] Quenched the violence of fire, [h] escaped the edge of the sword, [i] out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, [k] turned to flight the armies of the aliens. **35** [l] Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were [m] tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: **36** And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover [n] of bonds and imprisonment: **37** [o] They were stoned,

d 1 Sam. 1. 20; 12. 20.—*e* 2 Sam. 7. 11.—*f* Judg. 14. 5; 1 Sam. 17. 34; Dan. 6. 22.—*g* Dan. 3. 25.—*h* 1 Sam. 20. 1; 1 Kings 19. 3; 2 Kings 6. 16.—*i* 2 Kings 20. 7; Job 42. 10; Psa. 6. 8.

k Judg. 15. 8; 1 Sam. 14. 13, &c.; 17. 51; 2 Sam. 8. 1.—*l* 1 Kings 17. 22; 2 Kings 4. 35.—*m* Acts 22. 25.—*n* Gen. 39. 20; Jer. 20. 2; 37. 15.—*o* 1 Kings 21. 13; 2 Chron. 24. 21; Acts 7. 58; 14. 19.

our writer first (verse 32) gives a list of heroes without naming their exploits; then (33–39) a list of exploits and sufferings without naming the heroes; and closes (verse 40) with placing **us** as the true successors in the whole line of heroes and sufferers. First are named four of the judges, rather in the order of eminence than of chronology. Then David as prophet-king, and Samuel as most eminent of prophets, introduces **the prophets.**

33. **Subdued kingdoms** — These were secular exploits, yet performed in service of the theocracy, and in firm allegiance to Jehovah, God of Israel. Conscientious generalship and statesmanship, performed in the right spirit, are in the line of **faith.** Happy the man who serves his country in allegiance to his God. **Wrought righteousness**—As just judges, rulers, and reformers. So Samuel, (1 Sam. xii, 3, 4;) David, (2 Sam. viii, 15;) so Elijah, Elisha, and Josiah. **Obtained** the fulfilment of **promises.** This is no contradiction to 39. The old heroes rejoiced in the fulfilment of many *a* promise, but the entire body never attained **the promise,** namely, of the **heavenly country,** (verse 16,) the land of the **better resurrection. Stopped the mouths of lions**—Daniel, who expressly boasted, "*My* God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths;" and it is added, "because he believed in *his* God." Faith in God, the God of Israel, in opposition to the Chaldean idolatries, was the nerve of his action.

34. **Quenched ... fire** — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Dan. iii. Theophylact finely says, "Not quenched the fire, but, what is greater, the power of the fire." The fire was allowed to blaze, but not allowed to burn. **Strong ... weakness**—As females enabled to do exploits, Deborah and Esther; Hezekiah, after his sickness; the whole nation in its weakness, at the return from captivity. **Valiant in fight**—Observing a general chronological order, our writer evidently comes down to the age of the Maccabees. **Armies** — Literally, *camps.* **Aliens**—Foreigners.

35. **Women received** (literally, *from a resurrection*) **their dead**—The son of the widow of Zarephath, (1 Kings xvii, 17,) raised by Elijah, and of the Shunammite, (2 Kings iv, 17,) by Elisha. **Were tortured**—Literally, **were** *tympanized,* or **tortured,** perhaps to death, on the *tympanum,* or tambourine, or drum. The tympanum (derived from *tupto,* to strike) was, first, a musical instrument with a circular frame varying from a drum to a tambourine, with a skin membrane to be beaten to produce the tune. Thence a similar frame, sometimes called a *wheel,* upon which criminals were stretched for beating, with a severity often ending in death. **A better resurrection**—Than that of the widows' sons; being a **resurrection** not to a temporal but to an immortal life.

37. **Stoned**—This punishment was Jewish. We have no instance of its use recorded in the Maccabean period. But the case of Stephen really brings us down to Christian times. In the Old Testament Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, (commemorated by our Lord Matthew xxiii, 35; Luke xi, 51,) was

they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: [p] they wandered about [q] in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; **38** Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and [r] *in* dens and caves of the earth. **39** And these all, [s] having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: **40** God having [9] provided [t] some better thing for us, that they without us should not be [u] made perfect.

p 2 Kings 1. 8; Matt. 3. 4.—*q* Zech. 13. 4 *r* 1 Kings 18. 4; 19. 9.—*s* Verses 2, 13.

9 Or, *foreseen.*—*t* Chap. 7. 22; 8. 6.—*u* Chap. 5. 9; 12. 23; Rev. 6. 11.

stoned; and tradition asserts the same of Jeremiah. **Sawn asunder**—Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others say, that Isaiah underwent this death by order of King Manasseh. Jerome says, this was a "most true tradition." **Tempted**—Commentators are puzzled to find so mild a word as **tempted** between so severe words as **sawn asunder** and **slain.** The text is not rendered questionable by any varied reading, although the word is omitted by the Syriac and some manuscripts. Scholars have variously proposed different Greek verbs resembling the Greek one in question to the amount of a dozen or so, most of them signifying *were burned.* Stuart suggests that the word designates the temptations so often offered in the midst of the tortures to induce them to recant. This Alford condemns, as not mitigating the difficulty. But why not? Between the severest inflictions was the very place to put the temptations that intervened. Though less severe to the flesh they were more trying to the spirit, and fraught with a more fearful danger. And this we hold to be the true solution. Finally, our author describes the martyrs as (not hermits abandoning society, but) exiles driven from among men by persecution. **Goatskins**—The rougher, by climax, placed last. These garments were not assumed ascetically by them, but for want of better wardrobe.

38. **World... not worthy**—Though treated as **not worthy** of **the world**, yet, truly, **the world was not worthy** of them. It was because they were too good for it that they were driven out of it. Judea abounds in wild coverts for refugees. Obadiah hid fifty prophets in a cave, 1 Kings xviii, 4, 13. Mattathias and his sons took refuge in the mountains, 1 Mac. ii, 28. Josephus, in his Antiquities, says of the father of the line of Maccabees: "Having said these things, he rushed off with the children into the *desert*, leaving all his property in the village; the same thing the others doing, with their children and wives, fled into the *desert* and abode in the caves."

39. Recapitulation and conclusion. **These all**—The whole list, taken generally from verse 32, yet applicable to all the examples of the chapter. **Report**—Being divinely *witnessed to*, or attested, by God himself. **Received not** (the fulfilment of) **the promise**—For the fulfilment of that **promise** completely takes place at the resurrection of the just. Many a specific fulfilment of **promise** was obtained by various worthies, but by none **the** final **promise.** Abraham found a fulfilment of a special **promise** in the birth of Isaac, (note, vi, 16;) and others in the present chapter (ver. 33) **obtained promises;** but for the bodily resurrection the old worthies and we are still alike waiting. Progressively, indeed, ever since the advent, the **promise** has been in course of consummation, but the bringing in of its full fruition closes with the final mediatorial act The spirits of the just waiting in paradise have attained *a* fulfilment. They are (xii, 23) **the spirits of the just made perfect,** as blessed **spirits,** but not as perfected men.

40. **Better thing for us**—To the question, What **better thing?** the remaining words of the verse furnish the answer. We and these worthies form one Church, which is to be *perfected* in one resurrectional glory. As there was one crucifixion, so by the

CHAPTER XII.

WHEREFORE, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, [a] let us

[a] Col. 3. 8; 1 Pet. 2. 1.—[b] 1 Cor. 9. 24; Phil. 3. 13, 14.—[c] Rom. 12. 12; chap. 10. 36.

divine order there is to be one final inauguration of the glorified Church. And that must wait **for us**; which is **better for us** than to be left out, or to happen in sporadically, as so many afterthoughts. We are on an equality with the worthies of old. In fact, our perfecting is the divine condition of their perfecting. They cannot attain the consummation **without us.**

CHAPTER XII.

1. **Wherefore**—In view of the facts of the episode of chapter xi—the glories of **faith** and its champions. **Let us** resumes the exhortation begun at x, 19, interrupted by chap. xi, and from this point essentially continued through the remainder of the epistle. **We also**—The **also** connecting the **we** with the sublime roll of worthies. **We,** and not the Judaists, are in their line; our faith is their **faith. A cloud of witnesses**—Lünemann denies that the **witnesses** are represented to be *spectators*, and so the passage does not, as many think, picture to us a figurative race-course in the campus, with a crowd of departed saints watching us from their high seats while we run the race of faith in which they were our predecessors. Undoubtedly, after the manner of Paul, the word **witness,** as noun or verb, is, in its different meanings, a reigning word here. The Greek word, obscured in our English translation, appears in xi, 2, 4, 5, 39, where the heroes of **faith** are *witnessed* or attested by God. Here the *witnessed* become **witnesses**; those who were testified to now *testify*, namely, to the grandeur of the **faith.** The additional meaning of spectators, namely, of our race, by which they become not only testifiers to the **faith,** but watchers of our career of **faith,** is derived from *the position assigned them in the picture.* So that, triply, they are the *witnessed to* of God, the witnesses for faith, and the watching **witnesses** of our **faith**-course. We run the heavenly race under the eye of the heroes who are attested of God as heroes of the true **faith.** The word **cloud** is often used by Greek writers to figure a crowd of men; here, with allusion to the elevated position of the spectators in the heavens, as in a high gallery, around and above the racers. **Every weight**—That would impede our fleetness. The Greek word Ὄγκος denotes *a swelling*, especially of superfluous flesh; and this the ancient racer removed by fasting and exercise. It, therefore, very strikingly expresses any impediment, intrinsic to the person, to a rapid race. As the Greek word is also applied to the *swell* of a bombastic style, Bengel interprets here of spiritual pride. The Greek medical writers used the term for all burdening and enfeebling obesity, and recommended gymnastics as its remedy. **So easily beset us**—The Greek adjective, εὐπερίστατος, may signify either something standing around us, something placing itself around us, or something placed around us. It may figure **sin** as an enemy surrounding or meeting us whichever way we turn, or as a garment or personal appendage fitted about us. The ancient racer stripped himself of every unnecessary apparel. And so as **weight** refers to intrinsic and personal impediments, *besetment* may imply any extraneous surrounding hinderance. **With** (rather, *through*) **patience**—Energetic persistence. We are told (x, 3) of the **need of patience** as an accompaniment, but here it is the main means or method of running the successful race. We are to put forth all our inherent energy, incited by the divinest motives. **The race**—The whole heroic work of **faith** wrought by the heroes of chap. xi is here compressed into this one conception of **race.** The **witnesses** once ran the same **race** that we now run. **Set** (or, rather, Greek, *lying*) before

lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and [b] let us run [c] with patience the race that is set before us, **2** Look-

ing unto Jesus the [1]author and finisher of *our* faith; [d] who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and [e] is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 [f] For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, [g] lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. **4** [h] Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. **5** And

1 Or, *beginner.*—*d* Luke 24. 26; Phil. 2. 8, &c.; 1 Pet. 1. 11.—*e* Psa. 110. 1; chap. 1. 3, 13; 8. 1; 1 Pet. 3. 22.

f Matthew 10. 24, 25; John 15. 20.—*g* Galatians 6. 9.—*h* 1 Corinthians 10. 13; chap. 10. 32, 33, 34.

us—The solemn task of our earthly probation.

2. **Looking unto**—Mainly as our example, as the next verse shows. **Jesus** ran the most arduous **race** of all, and attained the loftiest final seat of all. So that, while we are **looking unto** him, he is looking down upon us, a most divine *witness* and spectator of our race. The heroes of chap. xi, **we,** and **Jesus,** are all in the same inclusion, **Jesus** being supreme exemplar and real founder of the whole. **Author...finisher... our faith**—The word **our,** as is indicated by the italics, is not in the Greek, but the article *the—the* **faith.** Hence the meaning is, not that **Jesus** is the **author** or *inspirer* of **faith** in us; but that he is the beginner and founder of *the* **faith** of all the roll, by being their great suffering and conquering example, as described in words following. **Finisher**—He finished *the* **faith** by his own triumphant example, whereby he ascended to heaven and made like **faith** and like triumph possible to us. **The joy set before him**—Of being triumphant and glorified head of a glorified body of saints in heaven. Compare Rom. viii, 29. **Set before him**—By the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Endured the** (or, rather, *a*) **cross**—The meaning is, not that he endured **the,** that is, some specially appointed **cross,** but that he endured such a thing as *a* **cross. Despising** (omit **the,** which is not in the Greek) **shame**—That is, not simply **the** one **shame** of crucifixion, but every thing in the nature of ignominy that could be heaped upon him. **Is set**—Rather, actively, *has taken his seat.* From endurance on earth he passes to the throne of heaven, and there now sits. Herein he is the deepest of all sufferers and the most triumphant of all victors; a perfect and supreme example of which we are the little imitators.

3. ADMONITORY.—**Review your past history as of cheerful and hopeful, yet fearful, endurance, 3-17.**

3. **For consider him**—Our author pauses to hold the suffering phase of the victorious Exemplar before their mind's eye steadily. Think of his old-time endurances, and that will explain and lighten your own. His Father, permissively, exposed him to trials; so then realize that your trials are the dealings of a Father.

We may lose the connexion here by not keeping in mind that the **chastisements** of 4–13 all refer primarily to the persecutions the Hebrews had to endure from their unbelieving adversaries. Not that the specific acts of persecution were preordained of God; but the endurance of trials is part of our probation, and it is a cheering explanation to interpret every infliction as a divine discipline. **Endured such contradiction—Contradiction,** a pregnant term, including all that the **sinners** referred to inflicted. **Lest ye be wearied**—In order that ye may not falter and apostatize. **Faint**—Exhausted by the wearing contest; forgetting your Exemplar, and losing sight of the final exaltation.

4. **Have not yet resisted**—Rather, (Greek aorist,) **ye** *did not resist;* spoken as of a particular time. The most obvious recent time is at the persecution under Ananus, and martyrdom of St. James, two years previously. See our Introduction to the Epistle of James. **Unto blood**—As Jesus did, and as some of their leaders had, xiii, 7. **Yet**—Though that may **yet** come. Taunts, exclusions, loss of property, they had endured; but they were still alive. Even in the days of Stephen, Stephen

ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, [i]My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: **6** For [k]whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. **7** [l]If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? **8** But if ye be without chastisement, [m]whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. **9** Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto [n]the Father of spirits, and live? **10** For they verily for

i Job 5. 17; Prov. 3. 11.—*k* Psa. 94. 12; 119. 75; Prov. 3. 12; James 1. 12; Rev. 3. 19.—*l* Deut. 8. 5; 2 Sam. 7. 14; Prov. 13. 24; 19. 18; 23. 13.

m Psa. 73. 15; 1 Pet. 5. 9.—*n* Num. 16. 22; 27. 16; Job 12. 10; Eccles. 12. 7; Isa. 42. 5; 57. 16; Zech. 12. 1.

was, perhaps, the only executed martyr. But this was a later generation of Jerusalem Christians, and though they were victimized by the oppressive hierarchy, they were not slain. **Striving** — *Antagonizing;* a palestric term borrowed from the boxing match, as verse 1 borrows from the race course. If Christians would use the same energy for good as sinners do for the bad, what heroic Christians would they often be! **Against sin**—The iniquity of your unbelieving opponents.

5. **Ye have forgotten**—Perhaps this is truly a question: have ye forgotten? It then becomes a gentle, yet reproving reminder. **Children**—Greek, *sons.* **Chastening** — Inflictions intended to reform, not to punish with irrevocable retribution. The good are disciplined, the incorrigible are vindicatively punished. When we suffer let us remember our sins, and be submissive. But our author puts it better even than this. When we suffer let us see in it a proof of our divine sonship, a promise of our own improvement, and rejoice.

6. **Loveth...chasteneth**—Even the attacks of persecutors, though neither appointed nor approved by God, yet when they come are by him used as trials by which we, if rightly using them, are bettered, and prepared to reign with the Jesus with whom we suffer. **Receiveth**—Accepts and treats as his son.

7. **If**—More properly an affirmation without an **if**: *It is for discipline that ye are suffering; God is dealing with you as with sons.* These Hebrew Christians were the sons, and the persecutions they endured were a divine discipline.

8. Nay, these persecutions are a proof of sonship, and should call forth a filial feeling. **All**—The sons, as in the catalogue of chapter xi, and as in the case of **we**, (verse 1,) and of **Jesus,** verse 2. Suffering is the necessary condition of divine heroism, the badge of divine sonship, from the highest Son to the humblest. **Bastards**—Offspring of the harlot, and **not sons** of God. Such were the Judaic oppressors; sons of an adulterous Church, and exempt from the hierarchical persecution.

9. **Furthermore** — The parallelism of the divine Fatherhood with the human tells infinitely for the former, and for the rightness of the chastisement. The human is often capricious, the divine always right. **Fathers of our flesh...Father of spirits**—Here appears a clear distinction between the origin of our **flesh,** or bodies, in the course of nature from our parents, and the origin of our spirits, above nature, from God. Not without some apparent reason have some of the earliest and greatest Christian doctors distinguished between the vegetable, the animal, and the spiritual elements in our natures. The first, man shares in common with all vegetable nature, being the *vis formativa*, the formative energy, the organizing principle, the plastic power which forms the body according to its type; which is simply the divine agency, as cause of causes, acting under form of finite causations and successions. It implies no thought or personal intelligence in the organism itself. Next comes the animal soul, a sensibility of the five senses to external objects, with powers of association, and impulses to action in accordance with the forces of im-

a few days chastened *us* [2] after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, [o] that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. **11** Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth [p] the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. **12** Wherefore [q] lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; **13** [r] And make [3] straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; [s] but let it rather be healed. **14** [t] Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, [u] without which no man shall see the Lord: **15** [v] Look-

2 Or, as *seemed good*, or, *meet to them.*—*o* Lev. 11. 44; 19. 2; 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16.—*p* James 3. 18.—*q* Job 4. 3, 4; Isa. 35. 3.—*r* Prov. 4. 26, 27.

3 Or, *even.*—*s* Gal. 6. 1.—*t* Psa. 34. 14; Rom. 12. 18; 14. 19; 2 Tim. 2. 22.—*u* Matt. 5. 8; 2 Cor. 7. 1; Eph. 5. 5.—*v* 2 Cor. 6. 1.

pressions. Both these are the offspring of the course of nature. Above them, and embracing and absorbing them into itself, is the spirit, whereby man is cognizant of the Infinite, and knows God, and is conscious of himself, and learns his own immortality. As this comes from God alone, so human parents are only the **fathers of our flesh**, while God is the **Father of spirits.** And these views, perhaps, furnish a settlement of the dispute between the Traducianists, who believed that the entire human soul is born of the human parent, and the Creationists, who held that all souls are created. The human spirit is created, the vegetable and animal elements in man are born. And physiology seems to show that the human embryo passes through these three stages. See notes on 1 Cor. xv, 44. **In subjection . . . and live — Live**, namely, that *spiritual* life which depends upon our obedient **subjection unto the Father of spirits.**

10. **A few days**—During the period of our minority. **Own pleasure**—Literally, *according to the seeming good to them.* Note, Eph. i, 9. It might be according to right and conscience, or it might be according to caprice, passion, or **pleasure.** This human fallibility of correction stands in contrast with the absolute, **for our profit,** of divine discipline.

11. **Peaceable fruit** — The word **peaceable** is used because the writer still retains the thought of *persecuting* trials. From these most unpeaceable **chastisements** a most **peaceable** result shall spring. **Fruit** consisting **of righteousness;** namely, of deeper faith, firmer trust, and loftier hope. But this **peaceable fruit** of a most turbulent tree will be *yielded* only to **them which are exercised,** that is, trained and educated, **thereby.** Trial yields bitterness and hardness to the wrong spirit.

12. **Wherefore** — In view of the rich harvest of **fruit** derivable from suffering for righteousness' sake, our author sounds a trumpet call of cheer and triumph to the racers in the Christian course (verses 1, 2) who are becoming **faint and wearied** (verse 3) with persecutions in **striving against sin. Hands, knees,** and **feet** must be inspired with new life and energy. **Hang down**—As if from exhaustion. **Feeble**—As from paralysis. **Paths**—Wheel-tracks or ruts. These should be **straight** that the **lame** might not stumble. **Healed**—By the even paths and the enlivening influence of the cheer and triumph.

14. **Follow peace**—The thought of *peace*, continued from verse 11, where see note. In spite of persecution, aim at peace **with all,** not only in the Church, but without. **Holiness**—The sanctified Christian life, the likeness to **the Lord,** without which **none shall see** him. It is queried by Delitzsch and Alford whether God or Christ is designated here, and Lünemann thinks it cannot be decided. But when the word **see** is used, as **see God,** (Matt. v, 8, where see note,) or, "see the kingdom of heaven," it is not a transient sight, nor, indeed, a *sight* solely at all that is meant, but a permanent acquaintance and fruition. In this true sense, though the wicked may **see** Christ in judgment, yet the holy will alone **see the Lord.**

ing diligently [w] lest any man [4] fail of the grace of God; [x] lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled; **16** [y] Lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, [z] who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. **17** For ye know how that afterward, [a] when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: [b] for he found no [5] place of repentance,

w Gal. 5. 4.——4 Or, *fall from.*——*x* Deut. 29. 18; chap. 3. 12.——*y* Eph. 5. 3; Col. 3. 5; 1 Thess. 4. 3.——*z* Gen. 25. 33.——*a* Gen. 27. 34, 36, 38.——*b* Chap. 6. 6.——5 Or, *way to change his mind.*

15. **Looking diligently**—The Greek might be rendered *episcopizing;* the word from which *bishop* is derived. Every Christian should be bishop in this respect, watching for the purity of the Church. **Root of bitterness**—Not a principle or an event, but a *person*, who springs up like a poisonous plant in a garden, and whose noxious quality is contagious. So Christ is beautifully called the "root of David;" and, in the Apocrypha, Antiochus Epiphanes is called "a sinful root." But the allusion here is to Deut. xxix, 18: "Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood." **Trouble**—By a curious coincidence the Greek words in Deut. xxix, 18, "in gall," ἐν χολῇ, are the same as this **trouble**, ἐνοχλῇ, with one letter transposed. This is, perhaps, a slight word-play by our author. The Alexandrian text of the Septuagint has more nearly the precise words of Paul, but Delitzsch thinks that text to have been changed into conformity with his words.

16. **Fornicator**—Who would be eminently "a root of bitterness," defiling the Church. Some so separate **fornicator** by a comma as to preclude its being an intended epithet for **Esau.** Esau was said by tradition to have been unchaste, but it is not clearly said here; while it is clearly said that he was a **profane person.** By that epithet is meant a man regardless of sacred things, perhaps a scoffer. Esau's profanity was displayed in his undervaluation of **his birthright.** Among primitive nations the firstborn had eminent secular rights and honours; but in the Abrahamic family it implied a religious continuity of lineage, through which, according to the Abrahamic promise, Messiah was to be born. The act of Esau in selling **his birthright,** was, hence, based in a contemptuous scepticism, a real apostasy from the Abrahamic faith, (so a proper warning against *apostasy,*) which apostasy descended in the Edomite line. Jehovah could not be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Esau, for Esau and his line contemned him.

17. **Ye know**—As Israelites you are all familiar with the memorable history. **No place of repentance**—That is, room or chance for successful or *accepted* repentance; repentance obtaining restoration. Such is the meaning of the phrase, *locus penitentiæ*, **place of repentance,** even in the classic authors. Clemens Romanus says, "The Lord hath given a place of repentance (that is, a chance for *accepted* **repentance**) to those wishing to turn to him." And Livy the historian, "Leaving a place of repentance"—that is, a chance of repentance that would obtain pardon. The interpretation given by some modern commentators, that *no favourable change in Isaac's mind towards Esau* is meant by **repentance,** is untenable; for **repentance** would be no proper term for such a change, as it would imply previous wrong in Isaac. The meaning here, then, is, that Esau's tears and prayers afforded no chance for favour, or regaining **his birthright.** The divine will had fundamentally settled the Messianic line, and Isaac's inflexibility was the expositor of that will. It was not, however, a question of Esau's personal salvation, but of his place in the theocratic line. It was perfectly competent for Esau to repent of his sins and be saved; but no **repentance** could re-purchase **his** sold **birthright.** Yet it is probable that Esau's **repentance** was as **profane** as his sale. No faith in the sacred Messianic family hope, no trust in Jehovah, inspired it. It was a selfish anx-

though he sought it carefully with tears.

c Exod. 19. 12, 18, 19; 20. 18; Deut. 4. 11;

iety to recover a lost supremacy. The wild hunter, the fierce Edomite, had become by fixed habit his permanent nature. So was he appropriate type of that Judaism toward which these Hebrews were vibrating. There was plenty of Jewish **tears**, grief over fallen temple and nation, but no faith in her Messiah, and so no possible acceptable **repentance.**

4. INSPIRATIONAL.—**In view of our Mount Zion, so superior to Sinai, let us have grace and confidence, 18–29.**

18. **For**—In view of the above warning of forfeiting their **birthright** by relapsing from the gospel dispensation into the Sinaitic, he will draw them a symbolic picture of the two. **Ye are not come**—The word **come**, here and in verse 22, is significant. It is said, (Deut. iv, 11:) "Ye *came* near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness." The journeyings of Israel are typical of our probationary journey in life and history. The Jew has only arrived as far as Sinai; we Christians have attained to Zion.

Bengel, followed by Delitzsch, finds in the two pictures a series of particulars, amounting each to seven, which are in some degree antithetical.

1. The mountain (Sinai) that can be touched.	1. Mount Zion.
2. Kindled fire.	2. City of the living God.
3. Dense clouds.	3. Myriads of angels and firstborn.
4. Darkness.	4. God the judge of all.
5. Storm.	5. Spirits of just perfected.
6. Sound of the trumpet.	6. Jesus, mediator of the new covenant.
7. Voice of words.	7. Blood of sprinkling.

18 For ye are not come unto [c] the mount that might be touched,

5. 22; Rom. 6. 14; 8. 15; 2 Tim. 1. 7.

An understanding of this tabulated parallelism is facilitated by a comparison with a similar tabulation in our notes to Gal. iv, 22–26. The same two things are illustrated in both tables, namely, the old theocracy, or Judaism, and the new, or Christianity. Both are furnished for the same purpose, namely, to prevent a relapse from the new to the old. In both cases the two mountains, Sinai and Zion, form the basis of the whole conceptual framework. And it is curious to note that as in Galatians the reader finds the actual name Zion to be omitted, so, by the best readings here, the actual name of Sinai is omitted. The term **mount** is, in fact, absent from the text of so many good manuscripts that both Lachmann and Alford omit it; but the sentence is thereby so lamed, that Delitzsch holds it to have been omitted by the carelessness of an early copyist. Tischendorf's text reads, **Ye are not come to** *a touched and kindled* (lighted to full conflagration) *fire, and to black clouds, and darkness, and tempest.* Perhaps the phenomena crowning the **mount** are named as an elegant implication of the mountain; or, rather, we might say the *fire* stands for the mountain itself, as *volcano* would stand for the mountain in which it rages, or as a burning building is called "a conflagration." Yet Alford's view may be best, namely, that the author's mind has **mount** here, though the word is unwritten until the opposite **Mount Zion** is reached in verse 21. **Might be touched**—That is a tangible *material* mountain, though it was forbidden to be **touched**, in Exodus xix, 12, 13. Bengel interprets as "lightning-touched," that is, by God; Wordsworth, *a mountain that had to be groped after*, that is, in the darkness; a sense justified indeed by the Greek word for **touched**, but hardly making a congruous idea. The **mount** was a material object, and all the particulars ascribed to it in this passage are physical and sensible. Nevertheless the literal

and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, **19** And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard [d] entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: **20** For they could not endure that which was commanded, [e] And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: **21** [f] And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: **22** But ye are come [g] unto mount Zion, [h] and unto the city of the living

d Exod. 20. 19; Deut. 5. 5, 25; 18. 16.—*e* Exod. 19. 13.

f Exod. 19. 16.—*g* Gal. 4. 26; Rev. 3. 12; 21. 2, 10. *h* Phil. 3. 20.

mountain is really the base on which is overlaid the conception of old Judaism. Our author does not merely tell his readers that they have **not come** unto the literal Sinai; but that they have truly gone beyond the Sinaitic dispensation and **come** to the Zionic. **Blackness**—The dense dark cloud encircling the mountain on whose summit was the **fire,** shadowing the lower sides of the mountain with darkness, while from the cloud and darkness issued the **tempest.**

19. **Trumpet**—Note on 1 Thess. iv, 16. **Voice of words**—From the **fire** at the summit.

20. While 18 and 19 give the essential particulars of the Sinaitic scene, 20 and 21 are added as the aggravations of the fearfulness of the whole. **Endure that...commanded**—Namely, the law that if even **a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned.** The command that the intruding beast should be slain is in Exodus xix, 13. This command **they could not endure.** If the English reader will place *namely* before **and** he will get the meaning. **Or thrust...dart** is rejected by the best authorities.

21. **And...Moses said**—Drop out **that,** which is not in the Greek, and enclose **so...sight** in a parenthesis. **I exceedingly fear...quake**—These words are not in the Exodus narrative. In Deut. ix, 19, Septuagint, the Greek for *I exceedingly feared* occurs. They there describe Moses's fear of the anger of Jehovah at the violation of the decalogue by the people. Lünemann says, that our author transferred these words by a slip of memory. Erasmus, Beza, Stuart, and others conjecture that he writes them from a traditional account; Calovius attributes them to his original inspiration; Rosenmüller, Stier, and Delitzsch hold that he does not mean that Moses used these very words, except mentally, but that the words, as in Deut. ix, 19, are used to express Moses's emotions at the Sinaitic scene. Stuart says: "It is implied, however, [that Moses trembled,] where it is said that 'all the people in the camp trembled,' and Moses was with them."

22. **Are come unto**—In your historic progress you have attained to. Note, ver. 18. A scene infinitely more joyful opens before them than saluted and appalled the trembling Israel. As Sinai represents the terrors of the law, Zion stands for the glories of the gospel. The old mountain is basis-symbol of the pitiless decalogue; the new, is the basis of all the conceptions of mercy and glory contained in the blessed gospel. Concretely, the old is the basis of the Jewish Church; the new, is basis of the New Testament Church. **Mount Zion**—Delitzsch asks with much persistence, what and where is this **mount Zion?** Bengel had said it is "the seat of the new covenant;" which Delitzsch condemns as presenting no idea at all. He thence maintains that this **mount Zion** is in the highest heaven, (note on 2 Cor. xii, 2,) and is the abode celestial of God himself. So that the antithesis here is, **mount** *Sinai* in the desert and **mount Zion** in the third heaven! Of course, such an antithesis is utterly incongruous. To his question, Where is this **mount Zion?** we answer by asking, Where is this **mount** *Sinai?* And our reply to both questions is, that the literal, material **mount** *Sinai* is in the Arabian desert, and the literal **mount Zion** is in Jerusalem. But these two

God, the heavenly Jerusalem, [i] and to an innumerable company of an-

[i] Deut. 33 2; Psa. 68. 17; Jude 14.

literal mountains are the representative bases of two systems of conception and truth, the one forming the doctrines and institutes of the old Church, and the other of the new. In the peculiar style of our author the first of these two systems is described, or, rather, merely implied, under a description of the physical scene at the Sinaitic lawgiving. The second of the two systems is described by first giving the physical symbolical base, namely, the mountain and city, and then a glowing series of holy idealities which are also divine realities, the clear revealing of which, is the glory of the new dispensation, the unity of which constitutes the doctrine of Christianity, and the faithful believers of which are the new Church. This bringing the significance of the two mountains into congruous relations saves us from mounting in Delitzsch's exegetical balloon to the third heavens.

The same in principle, though varying in details, is the **Jerusalem** of Gal. iv, 25, 26, where see our notes. There we distinguish, 1. The physical Jerusalem of walls and houses. 2. The *old* mystical *Jerusalem;* namely, the old covenant dispensation and Church. 3. The heavenly Jerusalem; our new theocracy, or dispensation, identical with the "beloved city" of Rev. xx, 9. 4. The glorified Jerusalem of Rev. xxi, which, after the advent, descends from heaven to earth.

We propose, however, to modify Bengel's sevenfold gospel symbols given above, and we suggest the following *scheme;* (giving of the first term, ver. 22, of the *seven* a literal translation of the Greek, which is without the article:) 1. *Zion, mountain and city of living God, heavenly Jerusalem,* which is the symbolic locality of the universal Church, into full communion with which we **have come** by faith in Christ. 2. *Myriads,* a festal **assembly of angels,** who conceptually hover over the Church, visible by faith. 3. The historic **Church of the firstborn,** (verse 23,) through

gels, **23** To the general assembly and church of [k] the firstborn,

[k] Exod. 4. 22; James 1. 18; Rev. 14. 4.

all ages, in the body and on earth, yet whose names **are written in heaven,** anticipatively associated thereby with **angels.** 4. **God,** under whom **all** are as **judge,** in both the kingly and judicial sense of the Hebrew word. And as thus far, under **God,** we have had *four* universals, so next we have rather *three* specialties belonging to the new dispensation, namely: 5. Disembodied **spirits** of the thus far saved and made perfect. 6. **Jesus the mediator,** (verse 24,) by whom they have been thus perfected. 7. **The blood** through which he has wrought their perfecting. And it is this advance from the old to the new which is attained by substituting our scheme for Bengel's.

In this our sevenfold *scheme* the words **city of the living God... heavenly Jerusalem,** are simply an expanding identification of **mount Zion,** and so designate, unlike Bengel's scheme, a single object. As Sinai was conceptual seat of the old covenant, this magnificent series of epithets is name of the conceptual seat of the new, which forms term 1 of the above seven.

And now, approaching this mystic **Jerusalem,** we descry a twofold glorious company, namely, term 2, the **angels,** and, 3, **the firstborn. To an innumerable**—Literally, **to** *myriads* **of angels,** who are a **general assembly;** in the Greek, *πανηγύρει,* the classic name of a general assemblage of a whole people to celebrate any public festivity, as public games, sacrifices, etc. Hence a *festal assembly.* The collection of holy **angels** are here so called as being a joyous body ever celebrating the glories of God.

23. While **angels** are a finished **Church** above, in future communion with them is a **Church** below. **Firstborn**—The term literally designates an eldest son. But as the eldest enjoyed, by Jewish and patriarchal law, a high supremacy, so the word is figuratively used to designate any superior or supreme person, whether eldest or not. So Israel, and Ephraim, and the Messiah,

[l] which are [6] written in heaven, and to God [m] the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men [n] made perfect, **24** And to Jesus [o] the mediator of the new [7] covenant, and to [p] the blood of sprinkling, that

l Luke 10. 20; Phil. 4. 3; Rev. 13. 8.—*6* Or, *enrolled*.—*m* Gen. 18. 25; Psa. 94. 2.—*n* Phil. 3. 12; ch. 11. 40.—*o* Ch. 8. 6; 9. 15.—*7* Or, *testament*.—*p* Exod. 24. 8; ch. 10. 22; 1 Pet. 1. 2.

are each termed God's *firstborn*. Exod. iv, 22; Jer. xxxi, 9; Psa. lxxxix, 27. And so our author considers his Hebrews to be, verse 16, and counsels them not, like Esau, to sell their **birthright.** And this whole allegory is written to prevent their relapsing from their glorious Christian **birthright** into Judaism. In coming into Christianity they truly **are come** into communion with the universal **Church of the firstborn,** the historic successional Church living on earth in all ages. **Written in heaven**—See our note on Luke x, 20. It is the heir of heavenly citizenship on earth whose name is registered **in heaven.** Closing term of the first four is, **God the Judge of all**—Following the Greek order of the words, Lünemann and others render this, To **the Judge** (who is) **God of all.** Alford, however, vindicates on good grounds the English translation.

The last triad of our seven unfolds the nearer and dearer glories, under **Jesus,** of the **New Covenant.** They are, 5, the **spirits** of the Christian brethren now in paradise **made perfect;** 6, **Jesus,** who is the **mediator** of the **covenant** by which they are *perfected*; and, 7, **the blood** through which that consummation has been wrought. Yet even here, as the **blood** of the atonement reflects back upon the old covenant, so also the **spirits** of the ancient saints are presupposed as *perfected.* They are specially associated with **Jesus,** as being those already actually redeemed by him. **Spirits**—The disembodied in the intermediate state of paradise, or hades. Note, xi, 39, 40; 1 Pet. iii, 10; Luke xxiv, 39; Acts vii, 59. **Just**—By faith, pardon, and sanctification. **Made perfect**—Not simply **made perfect** in holiness; not merely complete by the finishing of earthly life and the dropping of bodily infirmities; but brought through Christ to the completed stage of a glorified yet disembodied spirit. There is a perfected resurrection stage and state, the ultimate completion of completions and perfecting of perfections yet to come, even for these **spirits made perfect.** And these disembodied paradisaic **spirits** are waiting for us, for without us they cannot attain that final resurrectional perfection.

24. **Jesus**—As Moses at Sinai was the **mediator** of the old **covenant,** so **Jesus** at **Zion** is **the mediator of the new.** Centrally, this **mediator** stands in the picture amid the **spirits made perfect** by **the blood. The blood of sprinkling**—The true cleansing efficacy of the atoning death figured as a **sprinkled blood.** Bengel has several pages on the physical blood of Jesus, (dubiously followed by Alford in a few lines,) which strike us as a most repulsive superstition. **Speaketh**—The **blood** of Christ, like **the blood of Abel,** has a voice; and it speaks **better things;** for as the **blood of Abel** spoke wrath on his murderer, the **blood** of Jesus speaks pardon and salvation. The true reading seems to be, not **better things,** but simply **better than. That of** not being in the Greek, the true reading is, **that speaketh better than Abel.**

In 18–24 we have a contrastive picture showing the gloom of the Judaistic and the glory of the Christian dispensation. It is introduced to show the fatal folly of the Hebrews' selling their **birthright,** by apostatizing from the former to the latter. Our author now (25–29) emphasizes that folly by showing that Zion has its terrors on impenitence as terrible as those of Sinai. There is a law in the gospel, a penalty upon unbelief. **God is a consuming fire** (verse 29) under every dispensation.

In the Zionic dispensation there is a Speaker who speaks from heaven, as there was one in the Sinaitic who spoke from earth, 25. It is the same Speaker as he who shook the ground at Sinai; and he promises that *once*

speaketh better things [q] than *that of* Abel. **25** See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for [r] if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven: **26** [s] Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, [t] Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. **27** And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth [u] the removing of those things that [8] are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shak-

q Gen. 4. 10; chap. 11. 4.—r Chap. 2. 2, 3; 3. 17; 10. 28.—s Exod. 19. 18.—t Haggai 2. 6.

u Psa. 102. 26; Matt. 24. 35; 2 Pet. 3. 10; Rev. 21. 1.
8 Or, *may be shaken.*

more he will shake the sky as well as ground. This Speaker, through both dispensations, is, therefore, the same, namely, Jesus-Jehovah, 26. And this promise of a greater shaking than that of Sinai **signifieth** a **removing** of the **shaken** things, namely, the old covenant; which removable **things** are thereby seen to be transient, yet implying an underlying permanent domain that is irremovable and eternal—the Messianic kingdom, verse 27. We, accepting this irremovable and eternal **kingdom**, should **serve God** with **godly fear**, (28,) for the refuser to hear the earthly-heavenly Speaker will find a **consuming fire** in **our God.**

25. **See**—Uttered, as Delitzsch says, with the uplifted warning finger. **Him**—The Son of God, as the Jehovah and Logos of both Testaments. **Spake on earth**—In the trumpets, thunders, and voice from Sinai. **Him that speaketh from heaven**—Not simply the ascended Jesus; but the Logos, Lord alike of Sinai and Zion. For it was he who uttered the prophecy of Haggai, quoted next verse. It was the same **I** who shook the earth at Sinai, and who promised by Haggai to shake both heaven and earth at the first advent.

26. **He**—See note on the last verse. **Then...now**—At Sinai **then**, at Zion **now.** The former the inauguration of Mosaicism, the latter of Christianity. **Earth...also heaven**—Delitzsch and Alford labour painfully to refer the latter *shaking* to Christ's second advent to judge the world. The antithesis, then, would be between the scene of Sinai and the final conflagration and renewal of the earth. This is, again, a very incongruous antithesis. The shaking of Sinai would be physically a very insignificant event, out of all comparison with such a mundane revolution as the earth's destruction. Alford fully urges that "it is wrong to understand this *shaking* of the mere breaking down of Judaism." But surely the overthrow of the old dispensation was as important an event as its first establishment. The inauguration of the new kingdom by Christ's first advent was an immensely more stupendous event than the first inauguration of the law. Symbolically, Zion is a far taller mountain than Sinai. As a physical phenomenon, the proper antithesis to the day of Sinai is the day of Pentecost. See our notes on Acts ii, 1–4. On that day heaven and earth were shaken physically, and as broadly as at Sinai, and with an infinitely sublimer significance; a significance pervading all the Christian ages.

27. **This word,** (or formula,) **Yet once more**—The passage is quoted from Haggai ii, 6, and reads, according to the Septuagint, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and sea, and dry land." And, (verse 21,) "I will shake the heavens and the earth." This shaking of all, typified by the pentecostal physical shaking, is symbolically wrought with wonderful grandeur by the power spiritual, civil, and political of Christianity, through all the seas and lands of our earth. **Removing... as of things that are made**—**Made** in a deprecatory sense; fabricated, manufactured, in contrast with things intrinsically permanent and eternal. **Things made** are the transitory; things *unmade* are irremovable and forever remain. The *forms* of the old dispensation were **made**, and so transient; the underlying **kingdom** of God is immutable, and must **remain.**

en may remain. **28** Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, [g] let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: **29** For [r] our God *is* a consuming fire.

g Or, *let us hold fast.*—r Exod. 24. 17; Deut. 4. 24; 9. 3; Psa. 50. 3; 97. 3; Isa. 66. 15; 2 Thess. 1. 8; chap. 10. 27.—*a* Rom. 12. 10; 1 Thess. 4. 9; 1 Pet. 1. 22; 2 Pet. 1. 7; 1 John 3. 11.

28. **Receiving a kingdom**—That **kingdom,** once underlying Mosaicism, now underlies Christianity. **We** stand, therefore, upon an immutable basis. On that basis we may **serve God acceptably.** Yet not with unmingled joy A **godly fear** yet remains, not as to the trueness of our basis, not as to the faithfulness of God, but as to our own faithfulness. Our Hebrews may relapse from the true basis of Christianity to the false foundations of old Judaism—from Zion to Sinai.

29. **For**—Before this **for** the Greek has a most pregnant *and.* Its meaning is, And all this **fear** is right, **for,** etc. **God... fire**—Quoted from Deut. iv, 24, "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." It was a fearful reason given by Moses to warn them from forsaking the old covenant and apostatizing to idolatry; it is now repeated to warn these Hebrews against relapsing into obsolete Judaism. We might place the emphasis on **our,** and then the meaning would be, that the God of Zion is as retributive as the God of Sinai. But the true emphasis is upon **fire,** and the meaning is, that **our God** is not pure grace, but also justice. And with this most solemn sentence closes the author's argument and exhortation against apostasy.

CHAPTER XIII.

PERSONAL.—**Admonitions and salutations to the Jerusalem Church, 1-21.**

Though this epistle begins as a treatise and continues as an oration, it ends as a personal letter.

1. **Brotherly love**—A single word, used in the classics of love between brothers and sisters. The Jews applied the word *brother* to any Jew; the Christians appropriated it from a racial use to a religious one. **Continue**—It had existed in past times; it was liable to be broken by tendencies to apostasy; **let** it be firm and permanent. **Entertain strangers**—A branch of **brotherly love.** The absence of hotels in the East made hospitality a cardinal virtue. The itinerant servants of Christ ever needed an itinerant home. **Entertained angels unawares**—A beautiful allusion to Abraham (Genesis xviii) and to Lot, Genesis xix, 1–3. Our author does not suppose that his readers will ever entertain an angel in like manner, but the entertainers of Christian ministers have often in past times found that they entertained something better than **angels,** namely, messengers of salvation to the family. The successive phrases, **continue, be not forgetful, remember,** are forms of reminder of virtues which had existed but were liable to perish from negligence. Many a Christian at the present day is lost to the Church because, in going to a new locality, he is received by the Church there with inhospitality and neglect. Christian sociality is a virtue of great churchly value, and ministers should emphasize it in their teachings.

3. **Remember them that are in bonds**—From the travelling brother to be entertained, transition is easily made to the brethren in prison. **As bound with them**—As if their **bonds** were your **bonds,** since ye are one in Christ, liable to the same persecutions. **Suffer**—The common lot of all **in the body** and so demanding a common sympathy between those in common lot. To learn from our own sufferings to sympathize with sufferers is a very valu-

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LET [a] brotherly love continue. **2** [b] Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby [c] some have entertained angels unawares. **3** [d] Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and*

b Matt. 25. 35; Rom. 12. 13; 1 Tim. 3. 2; 1 Pet. 4. 9.—*c* Gen. 18. 3.—*d* Matt. 25. 36; Rom. 12. 15; 1 Cor. 12. 26; Col. 4. 18; 1 Pet. 3. 8.

them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. **4** Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: [e] but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. **5** *Let your* conversation *be* without covetousness; *and* [f] *be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, [g] I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. **6** So that we may boldly say, [h] The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. **7** [i] Remember them which [1] have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: [k] whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation: **8** Jesus Christ [l] the

e 1 Cor. 6. 9; Gal. 5. 19; Eph. 5. 5; Col. 3. 5, 6; Rev. 22. 15.—*f* Matt. 6. 25; Phil. 4. 11; 1 Tim. 6. 6.—*g* Gen. 28. 15; Deut. 31. 6; Joshua 1. 5; 1 Chron. 28. 20; Psa. 37. 25.—*h* Psa. 27. 1; 118. 6.—*i* Ver. 17.—1 Or, *are the guides*.—*k* Chap. 6. 12.—*l* John 8. 58; chap. 1. 12; Rev. 1. 4.

able piece of education—an education of the heart.

4. That social life may be peaceful married life must be pure. **Marriage is honourable**—The verb should, unquestionably, be in the imperative, like the main verbs in the three previous verses and in verse 5. Render it, *Let marriage be (held) among you honourable in all respects, and the marriage bed be undefiled; for* (not **but**) *fornicators and adulterers God will judge.* The Greek attains a solemn emphasis, unattainable by the English, by closing the sentence with **God.** The implication is, men may disregard the law of chastity, legislators and judges may set human laws against it; but there is a final **judge** by whom it will be avenged—**God.**

5. **Conversation**—Your daily course and character in life. **Covetousness**—The enemy of hospitality, liberality, and peace. **Content**—Not excluding proper effort to better your condition, but securing tranquillity in the condition that results, and meeting all disadvantages with equanimity. **For he**—God. **Hath said**—Our happy equanimity is not based on a stoical reliance on self, but on a divine basis. The faithfulness of God underlies us. **He** and **I**, as Delitzsch tells us, are used in post-biblical Hebrew as mystical names of God. **Never leave ... forsake thee**—In substance this promise repeatedly occurs in the Old Testament, but never in exact words. Thus one, a modification, occurs (Septuagint) in Josh. i, 5: "I will never forsake thee nor overlook thee." Yet it is remarkable that the exact words given by our author are found in Philo, i, 430, 26. It is by all agreed that the coincidence is too peculiar to be accidental. Lünemann says, "Possibly, as Bleek and De Wette believe, the author has quoted it directly from Philo. But possibly, also, the expression, as here found and in Philo, may have been stereotyped into a proverb." Delitzsch suggests that the passage had assumed this form in the liturgical service of the synagogue, and thence may have been used by both Philo and our author. We know no law that forbids an inspired author to quote an uninspired. Paul quoted the Greek poets, Jude quotes the book of Enoch, and our author may have quoted Philo.

6. **Boldly**—Based on the primitive rock of God's own promise, how bold may we not be! **Helper**—Psalm cxviii, 6. **What man**—More properly, a direct question: *What can man do?*

7. **Remember**—As of the departed. **Have the rule**—Rather, *the leaders of you.* **End of their conversation**—The close and outcome of their life and career. The phrase suggests, but does not express, the martyrdom of at least some of their leaders. Long ago, nearly thirty years, Stephen was martyred. this our Paul having then consented James, brother of John, was slain by Herod about twenty years previous; and James, bishop of Jerusalem, perhaps about two years before this epistle was received. Of course, during the thirty years since Stephen many a Church official had deceased, leaving a memory to which Paul could refer as exemplar.

8. What is (verse 7) that **end** or outcome? It is **Jesus Christ,** the immutable. His double name is given in solemn emphasis. The eternity of his

same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. **9** [m] Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace; [n] not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. **10** [o] We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. **11** For [p] the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the

m Eph. 4. 14; 5. 6; Col. 2. 4, 8; 1 John 4. 1.—*n* Rom. 14. 17; Col. 2. 16; 1 Tim. 4. 3.

o 1 Cor. 9. 13; 10. 18.—*p* Exod. 29. 14; Lev. 4. 11, 12; 16. 27; Num. 19. 3.

sameness consists in this, that the **to-day** is an ever movable standpoint. Take whatever **to-day** you please, and **Christ** was **the same yesterday,** and will be the same to-morrow, and so on **forever.**

9. Fixed on Christ, the immutable, **be not carried about** like a wind-whirled ship. The winds by which, as coming from different quarters, the ship is whirled and hurled about, are **divers and strange doctrines.** Probably the true reading is, *Be not carried away;* and then it suggests a being driven to an unknown destiny. **Divers** refers to their number and variety, **strange** to their unnatural and unchristian character. **Established**—Firmly based on **the** ever **same Jesus Christ. With,** or, rather, by **grace,** and **not by meats.** It is debated whether reference is here made to sacrificial meats eaten in idol temples or to meats ascetically avoided by religious vegetarians. But the **altar** of verse 10 is undoubtedly suggested by the word **meats** in this verse, and so indicates a reference to sacrificial **meats.** And, as Lünemann well argues, **profited** seems to refer not to abstaining, but to the eating of **meats. An altar**—We Christians discard all Jewish controversy touching sacrificial **meats,** for **we have** a sacrificial **altar** apart from all Jews. To the question, What is it that our author designates by the term **altar?** an obvious answer is, "The table of the Lord," whereon the emblem of the Victim is partaken, and from which all but the believing Christian are excluded. And, knowing as we do that the "table" existed in the full knowledge of our author, we cannot imagine that there should not have been in his mind some reference to it. Others have understood by **altar** *the cross* on which the real sacrifice was offered. But the real **altar,** or the deep reality symbolized by the word **altar,** has no material shape or nature. The "table," the *cross,* and the **altar,** are all but terms and images by which the saving power of the atonement is represented, the participation of which is limited to living faith. The *propitiatory merits of Christ* are at once the table, the **altar,** and the food by which the sinner lives. **No right to eat**—For they possess not the faith by which that aliment is received. **Serve the tabernacle**—The **tabernacle** built by Moses in the wilderness, which was the scene and emblem of Hebrew sacrifices; and was succeeded, when Jerusalem became the capital, by the temple built by Solomon, and rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and re-rebuilt by Herod. The tabernacle was in the desert in the centre of the **camp** of the hosts of Israel, and our author, as matter of doctrine, refers to it as the primitive institution rather than to the later temple. Yet, while he uses the primitive words **tabernacle** and **camp,** he uses the word **city** in verse 14, both being the same thing so far as the symbol was concerned.

11. **For**—To illustrate this separation between the faithful participant and unbeliever. As at the great day of atonement the sacrificed animal was carried out of the limits of **camp** or **city,** and burned; and as, similarly, Christ was led out of the **city** to be crucified, so do we, his followers, leave the symbolic "camp" or "city" of Judaism, and **go out unto him.** The Jew is in **the camp,** the **city,** and we are with the crucified One. Outside the city is the cross. Apart from the **tabernacle** is the Church, and in the Church is the true **altar.** The **bodies** of sacrificed **beasts** were generally eaten by priests or people. But there was one pre-eminent exception. On the great day of

sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. **12** Wherefore Jesus also, that he might [q] sanctify the people with his own blood, [r] suffered without the gate. **13** Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing [s] his reproach. **14** [t] For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. **15** [u] By him therefore let us offer [v] the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, [w] the fruit of *our* lips, [2] giving thanks to his name. **16** [x] But to do good and to communicate forget not: for [y] with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **17** [z] Obey them that [3] have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for [a] they watch for your souls, as they that

[q] John 17. 19; 19. 34; 1 Cor. 6. 11; Eph. 5. 26; John 5. 6, 8.—[r] John 19. 17; Acts 7. 58.—[s] Chap. 11. 26; 1 Pet. 4. 14.—[t] Mic. 2. 10; Phil. 3. 20; chap. 11. 10.—[u] Eph. 5. 20; 1 Pet. 2. 5.—[v] Lev. 7. 12; Psa. 50. 14, 23; 107. 22.

[w] Hos. 14. 2.—2 Gr. *confessing to.*—[x] Rom. 12. 13.—[y] 2 Cor. 9. 12; Phil. 4. 18; chap. 6. 10.—[z] Phil. 2. 29; 1 Thess. 5. 12; 1 Tim. 5. 17.—3 Or, *guide.*—[a] Ezek. 3. 17; 33. 2, 7; Acts 20. 28.

atonement the **blood** of the victim was **brought into the sanctuary** and sprinkled on the altar **for sin,** but the body of the beast, instead of being made a banquet for the people, was taken from **the camp** while in the desert, and from the **city** in later ages, and **burned without.**

12. **Jesus**, the antitype, in like manner **suffered without the gate.** Herein was pictured the divine secession from Judaism. The true sacrifice was limited by no city walls; was housed into no **tabernacle** or temple; was universal as the sky beneath which it was transacted.

13. **Let us**—The followers of the Crucified. **Go**—As he went. He went out of the material city, Jerusalem; we **go** out of the mystical **city,** Judaism. This is a striking proof that our epistle was addressed to Jerusalem. **Bearing his reproach**—The scorn, oppression, and persecution of the Jerusalem hierarchy and its partisans, under which our author's beloved "Hebrews" were suffering. **Let us go,** is his cheering word of command; **bearing his reproach,** are his words of holy patience and defiance.

14. **Here**—In Judaism, the mystic old Jerusalem. The words have, we think, no reference to our transitory abode on earth. **One to come**—Christianity, the mystic new Jerusalem below, the earthly counterpart and preparatory for the *New Jerusalem above.* Though the localities outside the city of Jerusalem, where the victim was sacrificed, look bare and desolate, yet mystically, outside the old Judaism, there is the future evangelic city **to come.** There is the mystic temple, the true Church; within it is the true **altar,** the "table of the Lord," the banquet of his atoning grace. From the old and past, **let us go** to the new and future. This symbolism of the mystical earthly Jerusalem must not be confounded with that of the celebrated new Jerusalem of Revelation xxi, though merging often in thought and in reality into it.

15. This mystical Jerusalem has also its **sacrifice,** namely, of **the fruit of our lips,** which is **praise** and **thanks.** In reference to man we endure **reproach;** yet to God our voice is holy song. Says Delitzsch: "According to a favourite Old Testament idea, thoughts are the branches and twigs, and words the flowers and **fruit,** which, rooted in the mind and heart, and springing up thence, shoot forth and ripen from the mouth and **lips.**"

16. Other **sacrifices** belong to this new **city,** namely, **to do good and to communicate;** that is, impart benefactions.

17. **Have the rule over you**—A prolix and not very correct rendering of words signifying (as in ver. 7) *your leaders,* or guides. Both verses imply certainly a distinction between laity and ministry. We have rather a distinct view of the Church polity at Jerusalem in Acts xxi, 18, (where see notes,) indicating that St. James was resident apostle with subordinate elders. The words **obey,** or *trust,* and **submit,** or *yield, concede to,* imply a

must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you. **18** [b]Pray for us: for we trust we have [c]a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. **19** But I beseech *you* [d]the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. **20** Now [e]the God of peace, [f]that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, [g]that great Shepherd of the sheep, [h]through the blood of the everlasting [4]covenant, **21** [i]Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, [5 k]working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; [l]to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. **22** And I beseech you, brethren,

b Rom. 15. 30; Eph. 6. 19; Col. 4. 3; 1 Thess. 5. 25; 2 Thess. 3. 1.——*c* Acts 23. 1; 2 Cor. 1, 12.——*d* Philem. 22.——*e* Rom. 15. 33; 1 Thess. 5. 23.——*f* Acts 2. 32; 1 Cor. 6. 14; 2 Cor. 4. 14; Col. 2. 12.

g Ezekiel 34. 23; John 10. 11.——*h* Zechariah 9. 11.——4 Or, *testament.*——*i* 2 Thess. 2. 17; 1 Peter 5. 10.——5 Or, *doing*——*k* Phil. 2. 13.——*l* Gal. 1. 5; 2 Tim. 4. 18.

mental position of trust and acknowledged authority. Our author endorses their ministry as true and faithful. **They watch**—That is, *are sleepless*, as vigilant shepherds. **Account**—To God in judgment. **That** refers to **grief.**

18. **For us**—Uniting the *leaders* and himself as a common subject of their prayers. Paul alone, of all the New Testament writers, asks the prayers of his readers. 1 Thess. v, 25; 2 Thess. iii, 1. **Live honestly**—A slight reminiscence that his character had been questioned at Jerusalem.

19. **But I**—Narrowing from **us** in the last verse to himself alone. **Restored**—It was St. Paul who had once been with them, was snatched from them, is now detained from them, hopes to be **restored** to them. This entire passage to the end of the epistle demonstrates that it was written, not directly to a general section, as Palestine, but to a particular Church. Yet though addressed to the mother city, it was intended to be treasured and read in all the churches.

20. In the coming two verses the epistle proper closes, after the Pauline manner, with a benedictory prayer. It is offered with a glance of retrospect over the whole epistle. **God of peace**—The formula of Paul alone. See Rom. xv, 33; 1 Cor. xiv, 23; 2 Cor. xiii, 11; Phil. iv, 9; 1 Thess. v, 23; 2 Thess. iii, 16. The whole of this chapter has, beginning with **brotherly love,** churchly **peace,** unity, stability, and obedience to pastoral rule, as its key-note. And the whole epistle has Christian stability and unity under the atoning Christ as its object. **Shepherd of the sheep**—Under whom it should be one peaceful fold. **Blood of the everlasting covenant**—Whose import our epistle has so richly unfolded. It is through (or, rather, Greek, *in*) **the blood of the covenant** that the risen **Jesus** is the **great Shepherd of the sheep.** In that character, and *in* possession of the power of that atoning **blood,** he was raised **from the dead.**

21. **Perfect**—Symmetrical and complete. **In every good work**—In all well doing. A perfection of Christian life, not consisting only in internal emotion, or showing itself mainly by outward profession, but manifesting itself in all well doing, and rendering vocal profession less necessary. **His will**—Which is the expression of perfect *right.* **Working in you**—Whilst you coöperate with his **working.** God will not **work** effectually **in** us unless we work efficiently with him. **To whom**—The nearness of the word **Christ** induces many commentators to make **whom** refer to him; and thus to him would be ascribed **glory for ever and ever.** But the naming of **Christ** here is comparatively incidental, the main subject being **God,** (verse 20,) so that the reference is more probably to him. **Amen**—This closes the epistle, and what follows is a personal postscript.

6. Postscript, 22-25.

22. Paul here makes earnest request for a considerate reception by the Hebrews of this epistle. **I beseech you**—His letter is full of solemn warn-

suffer the word of exhortation: for [m]I have written a letter unto you in few words. **23** Know ye that [n]*our* brother Timothy [o]is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. **24** Salute all them [p]that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. **25** [q]Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

m 1 Pet. 5. 12.—*n* 1 Thess. 3. 2.

o 1 Tim. 6. 12.—*p* Ver. 7, 17.—*q* Titus 3. 15.

ings and deep rebukes, and now, retracting nothing, he implores a patient acceptance. **Exhortation**—Though full of argument, the whole is **exhortation—exhortation** to persevere in Christian faith. **Few words—Few,** not as compared with his other epistles, but **few** in comparison with the vastness of the subject. **Written a letter in few words**—A reference to the brevity of his letter, characteristic of St. Paul alone of all the New Testament writers. Comp. Eph. iii, 3; Gal. vi, 11.

23. **Know ye**—The Greek form may be either indicative or imperative. But it is clear that our writer introduces this remark here to inform the Hebrews that he hopes that Timothy will visit them with himself, and that requires the imperative. The words are very conclusive proof that the writer is Paul. For, 1. They accord with the relations of Paul with Timothy, appearing in every mention of Timothy, and with no other. 2. The terms in which Timothy is mentioned as ὁ ἀδελφος, "the brother," are precisely the terms in which Timothy is designated in 2 Cor. i, 1; Col. i, 1; 1 Thess. iii, 2; and Philemon 1. The words **is set at liberty,** Delitzsch acknowledges are as well rendered *sent on an official mission,* (Acts xiii, 3, xv, 30;) and what that mission was we learn from Phil. ii, 19: "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you." This was written shortly before the epistle to the Hebrews, and fits with our present text so perfectly as to form a strong probability of unity. 3. If Timothy returns soon enough for Paul's visit to the Hebrews, then they will come together; if not, Paul comes alone. Delitzsch says, that there is no apparent subordination of Timothy here; but assuredly there is. Paul's visit to them is the main fact, Timothy's is the incidental. Timothy is as subordinate in being an attendant on Paul's visit, as he is in being sent on a mission by Paul to Philippi. 4. The words in regard to Timothy's *quick* return curiously correspond with Paul's words in Phil. ii, 19, 24, where the same Greek word for **shortly** is used. In all this is an accumulation of coincidences not to be set aside.

24. **Them that have the rule over you**—Same word as in verses 7 and 15, and signifying *leaders.* The antithesis here between *leaders* and **all the saints** implies a distinct and authorized drawn line between ministry and laity. The doctrine that such distinction is post-apostolical is inadmissible. And the duty of the latter to the former is expressed in verse 17 (where see notes) in terms rarely used by modern Congregationalism. **They of Italy**—That is, (as the best criticism now interprets the Greek,) *the Italian Christians.* The Greek phrase is, *οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας, they from Italy.* The German critic Bleek, in reviewing Stuart on Hebrews, maintained that the Greek *ἀπὸ* signified that the **they** were away *from* **Italy,** and so the epistle could not have been written in **Italy.** But Stuart triumphantly quoted instances where the phrase simply implied origin, or birthplace, or residence. Thus John xi, 1: *Lazarus, of* (*ἀπὸ*) *Bethany;* Lazarus being both a resident of the place, and at that time in Bethany. A salutation to the Hebrews at Jerusalem from so wide-spread a body as "Italian Christians" generally, might seem strange. But, 1. Paul says to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. xvi, 19,) "The Churches of Asia salute you." And St. Peter (1 Peter i, 1) addresses the Churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. 2. The leading body of Christians in Italy were doubtless known to Paul; his writing this epistle was doubtless known to them; he was authorized in spirit to salute the Jerusalem Church in their

name. 3. What Church was more suitable or more likely to be saluted from Rome than the mother Church of all, in whose streets Jesus had preached, and without whose **gates** he was crucified—*Jerusalem?* And in this we have a strong confirmation of the judgment of Christian antiquity, unwisely impugned by modern "criticism," that this epistle was written to the Church of that city.

25. **Grace...all**—Here, as said in our Introduction to this epistle, we have St. Paul's own appointed sign-manual given to authenticate his own epistle. **This was declared by him to** be the "token" of his hand in the second one of his written epistles extant. 2 Thess. iii, 17, 18: "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, *which is the* TOKEN *in every epistle:* so I write, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." In every one of Paul's fourteen epistles is this *token* found. 1 Thess. v, 28; 2 Thess. iii, 18; Gal. vi, 18; 1 Cor. xvi, 23; 2 Cor. xiii, 14; Rom. xvi, 24; Col. iv, 18; Philem. 25; Eph. vi, 24; Phil. iv, 23; 1 Tim. vi, 21; 2 Tim. iv, 22; Tit. iii, 15. This seems to be a declaration by the author himself that he is no other than Paul.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

EPISTLE OF JAMES.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS EPISTLE.

JAMES, the brother of Jesus, and probably the eldest son of Joseph and Mary,* was doubtless born at Nazareth, and lived there for years with his parents and his younger brothers, Joses, Simon, and Judas, and his sisters, mentioned but unnamed in history. He seems to have been specially consecrated from his birth as a Nazarite, and to have retained through life the strongest traits of that order. As a descendant of David he was an intensely national Jew, and expected a heroic Messiah who should overthrow Rome, and give a more than ancient glory and supremacy to Judea and Jerusalem. Hence he, with his younger brothers, looked upon the eldest, Jesus, notwithstanding the purity of his youthful character and the supernaturalisms that hovered round him, as mistaken if he assumed to be that patriot liberator. Hence, too, when his neighbors were amazed at his "wisdom," Jesus, with peculiar pathos, acknowledged himself "a prophet without honour in his own house." During the residence of the family in Galilee, when the earnest labours of our Lord in his divine mission drew upon him, from his enemies, the imputation of a demoniac, the family—mother and brothers—in a panic of unbelief went to bring him home, under assumption that his mental faculties had become overstrained by excitement. That the brothers were, at this time, not of the twelve, is certain from the fact that while they were without, the disciples were within, the house, listening to the Lord's discourse. As the eldest of these brothers, our James of this epistle must be considered as engaged in this family mission to Jesus.

Later in our Lord's ministry we have a still more unequivocal instance of the unbelief of James and his brothers. As the feast of tabernacles was approaching, his brothers proffered their advice to him to go and display himself to the world, pointing out the inconsistency of aspiring to be a national leader and yet lurking "in secret."

* The question of his and his brothers' sonship of Mary is discussed in note on Matthew xiii, 55. In regard to the three Jameses consult note Matthew x, 2.

Jesus recognises their wish for his putting himself at the head of the worldly expectants of a political Messiah. The hatred of "the world," he tells them, cannot rest on them, for they belong to its party; as for himself, he is a rebuker of its sin, and must bide the Father's time and method of his self-manifestation. It is remarkable that our James, who was one, and probably leader and spokesman, of these counsellors, uses the word "world" in this epistle in the very sense of the term as it occurs in our Lord's reply.

It was not until after the crucifixion and resurrection that James, with his brothers, emerges from this cloud. Luke (Acts i, 13, 14) informs us that they were present at the meeting which chose Matthias as apostle. Before mentioning them the apostolic list is given, clearly separating the *apostles* from the *brothers*. In that list two Jameses are named, one with his brother John, and the other "James the son of Alpheus." Alphean James was, therefore, an apostle, but not a brother of Jesus; our James, then, must have been a brother, but not an apostle. The key to his conversion seems to be, in some degree, supplied by Paul's statement that the risen Lord "was seen of James." 1 Cor. xv. 7.

Henceforth James resides in Jerusalem with an ever-increasing eminence. When Peter is released by the angel from prison he bids his friends "Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren." Acts xii, 17. When Paul returns from Arabia to Jerusalem, after his conversion, he sees Peter, and of the other apostles none "save James the Lord's brother;" where he is evidently called an "apostle," and also "the Lord's brother," which he would not have been if he were only cousin. Gal. i, 19. Fourteen years afterwards Paul comes to the Jerusalem Council, (comp. Acts xv, 2, with Gal. ii, 1,) and finds James (with Peter and John) one of "the pillars." Gal. ii, 9. At the council he sees James preside, and hears him pronounce from the Judaic side that liberalized sentence by which Gentile Christianity is excused from circumcision and the ritual, and Paul's own apostleship is acknowledged. Yet it had been "from James," professedly, that the ultraists had come to Paul's Gentile field at Antioch, proclaiming the unconditional necessity of circumcision to his converts, frightening Peter from his balance rendering Barnabas doubtful, and rousing Paul to demand the calling of the Council. Amid these elements of disturbance very conspicuous are the liberal conservatism and statesman-like dignity of James. Lastly, when Paul, at the close of his third missionary tour, visits Jerusalem, James, with the elders, received him in state and with an honour that fully shows the cordial relation in which each in his own position stood to the other. At this point it is difficult to say, with Pressensé, that James's dignity was nothing more than pre-eminence of character.

And the *official* nature of his position is somewhat confirmed by the fact that earliest accounts seem to agree that his immediate successor was Symeon, another relative of Jesus, and that a successional line of fifteen Hebrew bishops, whose names are given by Eusebius, extended to the final desolation of Jerusalem under Hadrian. As son of David he was lineal heir to the throne at Jerusalem, where he was a Christian bishop, and, doubtless, this fact gained immunities for him and for Christianity that otherwise could not have existed.

The strong sympathy of James for his countrymen, his lofty integrity of character, his deep tinge of asceticism, derived from his life-long Nazaritism, won for him the profound reverence of the people of Jerusalem with all but the dominating class. "He was," says Eusebius, "by all named the Just;" the very adjective applied by Matthew to his father Joseph. The traditional description of him is given by Hegesippus in a passage found in Eusebius to this effect: "He was consecrated from his birth. Wine and strong drink he drank not, never anointed himself with oil, or used the bath. To him alone it was permitted to enter the holy place, for he wore no woollen, but linen. He was accustomed to go alone into the temple, and would be found kneeling upon his knees and praying for the forgiveness of the people, so that his knees became indurated like those of a camel; and on account of his ever bowing his knees in worship to God, and pleading for pardon for the people, and, indeed, for his wonderful piety, he was called *Just*, and *People's Fortress.*" This description strongly suggests that James, in memory of our Lord's great prediction of the doom of Jerusalem, lived in consecrated supplication for the remission of that terrible sentence, and for the salvation of his people. In spite of his teaching that the Messiah had come in Jesus, they revered him as a man of unparalleled holiness, and felt his prayers to be the stronghold of public safety. But there was one proud ruler who looked with murderous hatred upon this brother of the Crucified—the high priest Ananus. He was restrained by the Roman power alone, and waited his opportunity for the destruction of the "Just." The chance at length presented itself.

A brief history of the successive Roman procurators over Judea we have given in our vol. iii, p. 233, down to Felix, in A. D. 51, who was succeeded by Festus, in A. D. 60, (note, Acts xxv, 1,) who was succeeded on his death by Albinus, in A. D. 62. The martyrdom of James we give in the words of Josephus: "Ananus, thinking he had a fitting opportunity at the death of Festus, and while Albinus was yet on his way, [from Rome,] calls a session of the Sanhedrin, and arraigning before it the brother of Jesus called the Christ, whose name was James, and certain others, bringing

accusation against them as transgressors, delivered them over to be stoned to death."

As Josephus narrates the governmental action, so Hegesippus (Eusebius, ii, 22) describes the popular side of the movement by which James was martyred. The profound piety of James so impressed the city that an apprehension arose among the hierarchy that he would carry the people with him. On the one hand parties of inquirers resorted to him, asking, "What is the (way or) 'door' of Jesus?" In other words, What is the true view in regard to your crucified brother? To these James firmly replied, "He is the Saviour;" in consequence of which testimony large numbers became believers. Alarmed at this, the Jewish leaders conceived a vain hope that James himself might be induced to modify his claims before the people, and they made him stand upon an eminence of the temple to address an explanation to the people. "O Just one," said they, "in whom we all ought to confide, What is the door of Jesus!" He answered with a loud voice, "Why ask ye me concerning Jesus, the Son of man? He sits in heaven at the right hand of the great Power, and is about to come in the clouds of heaven." The enraged authorities, with Ananus probably as chief mover, then incited the mob to stone him, whilst he, kneeling, exclaimed, "I pray thee, O Father, the Lord God, forgive them, for they know not what they do." At this moment one of the priests, of the sons of Rechab, interposed, saying, "Cease; what do ye? the Just one prays for you." But a certain fuller, taking a club belonging to his trade, struck him a fatal blow upon the head, and so "the Just" was martyred. They buried him upon the spot, and (says the narrator whom Hegesippus quotes) his pillar still remains by the temple. Hegesippus adds, that "straightway Vespasian besieged them;" but he doubtless conceptually shortens the real interval of time in order to trace a connexion between the crime of James's murder and the punishment of the city. Between the priesthood of Ananus and the siege of Jerusalem was a period of several years.

AUTHENTICITY, DATE, AND STYLE.

This is in the group of epistles which received but a late general recognition in the Church. The most decisive fact in its favour is its acceptance into the Peshito, which is the version of the very early Syriac Church, where the epistle was first published. It is, therefore, an ancient and a home testimony. There is a passage in the Shepherd of Hermas, the apostolic father, which appears to be an imitation of James iv, 7. But Origen is the first Greek father who expressly quotes the epistle with the author's name. Eusebius classes it as disputed, yet generally recognised. It is recognised by Hippolytus, bishop of

Portus, near Rome, as Scripture, but without naming the author; and is recognised by Jerome as Scripture, with the author's name. It was universally received in the fourth century.

As to the DATE, there are two opinions maintained, each by eminent scholars. The first, held generally by the earlier commentators, dated it a short time before the destruction of Jerusalem; the second, held by some later scholars, as Neander, Huther, and Alford, place its writing a short time before the Council of Jerusalem, (Acts xv,) about A. D. 45. This second we consider entirely too early.

A decisive objection to the early date is the late recognition of the epistle by the Church. If it were really written by James the brother of Jesus from Jerusalem to the general body of Hebrew Christians, in the Greek language, so early as A. D. 45, it would have obtained an early circulation, a general notoriety, and an established authority among the earliest documents of the New Testament canon. On the other hand, if published shortly before the overthrow of Jerusalem, we easily understand how, amid the tumults of the times, it should have failed of early general recognition.

A second objection to the early date is its assumption of a wide-spread and well-established Christian public already existing in the Jewish "dispersion." Where was this ecumenical audience in A.D. 45? Alford's reply that it appears in Acts xi, 19, and following verses, is entirely insufficient. A few scattered clusters of converts in Phœnicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, are very far short of meeting the demand. The whole air of the epistle presupposes a large body of Christian Hebrews scattered through the then civilized world, with Jerusalem for its spiritual capital.

Apparently in this epistle, as in Hebrews and the Pastoral and Catholic epistles, the discussions and strifes about circumcision and ritual are long past. In the Pastorals, St. Paul inveighs against the Gnosticizing Jews; in the Catholic, John against the Docetists; in Hebrews, Paul against the Alexandrines; while James, from the Hebrew side, only takes issue with the antinomians who misquoted Paul's doctrine of justification "to their own destruction." This implication, that our epistle appeared later than Paul's Romans, is pronounced by Alford "a superficial view;" and in the sense that it lies patent on the *surface* of the facts we acknowledge it to be *superficial*, but none the less fundamental and certain. There is nothing "improbable" in supposing that James delicately avoids personal collision with Paul himself, yet graphically states the counter truth in regard to faith and works, in order that the true doctrinal balance should be maintained in the Christian Church.

As to the state of things apparent in the epistle, we may readily

concede that the mention of *church* and *elders* by no means proves a late period, for these appear at the very origin of Christianity. But in James the Churches are world-wide; they have their regular-built synagogues; they have generally fallen into fixed habits, such as obsequiousness to the rich, an antinomian perversion of the Pauline doctrine of faith, and a too great loquacity of would-be teachers and "masters." The eloquent denunciatory apostrophe to "rich men" implies their established relations to the Church, while the woes pronounced upon them intimate the impending doom overhanging the city in which it was written.

As we see a probable allusion to the martyrdom of James in Heb. xiii, 7, so Hebrews must have appeared after this epistle. The order of facts we think as follows: This epistle; the martyrdom of James; Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews; the visit of Paul to Jerusalem, probably with Timothy; and the Jewish war and overthrow. As the death of James took place immediately upon the appointment of Albinus, its date must have been A. D. 62. How long this epistle was written before that event, though certainly not long, can only be a guess. We put it conjecturally at A. D. 60.

The permanent residence of James at Jerusalem places it beyond reasonable doubt that his epistle was written from that city. At the same time it is noted that the natural scenes alluded to by the writer were those familiar to a Jerusalemite. The sea is not far distant, (i, 6; iii, 4;) figs, oil, and wine are plenty, (iii, 12;) there are bitter fountains, (iii, 11, 12;) droughts and consequent danger of crops, (iii, 17, 15;) the burning wind, (i, 11;) and the former and latter rain, (v, 7.) The writer's relationship to Jesus seems to appear from his many similar allusions to nature. The resemblances to the style of Jesus, especially in the Sermon on the Mount, are remarkable. Alford gives the following list, (iv, p. 105:) James i, 2, with Matt. v, 10–12; i, 4, with Matt. v, 48; i, 5 and v, 15, with Matt. vii, 7, etc.; i, 9, with Matt. v, 3; i, 20, with Matt. v, 22; ii, 13, with Matt. vi, 14, 15, and v, 7; ii, 14, etc., with Matt. vii, 21, etc.; iii, 17, 18, with Matt. v, 9; iv, 4, with Matt. vi, 24; iv, 10, with Matt. v, 3, 4; iv, 11, with Matt. vii, i, etc.; v, 2, with Matt. vi, 19; v, 10, with Matt. v, 12; v, 12, with Matt. v, 33, etc.; and from other discourses of our Lord: i, 14, with Matt. xv, 19; iv, 12, with Matt. x, 28. Compare also the places where the rich are denounced with Luke vi, 24, etc.

READERS ADDRESSED.

The opening superscription, "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad," certainly means the entire Jewish nation. They are the Messianic race, the writer's own kinsmen: nay, as a descendant of David, they are his

own hereditary people. Yet it is to an inner circle of the tribes that his doctrines are immediately addressed. He is a servant of Christ, (verse 1,) and consoles his "brethren" in trial; his "synagogue" (English version, *assembly*, ii, 2) is a Christian Church; and his whole aim is to portray the formation of a "perfect" man, or model Christian, according to the gospel "law of liberty," by which the soul is most perfectly free in the most perfect obedience to righteousness. Yet he does not lose sight of the wider circle of the Messianic race. It is to that broader audience that he addresses his rebuke of the belligerent spirit in iv, 1–10; and we cannot avoid the conclusion, that in his prophetic apostrophe to "rich men," in v, 1–6, he denounces, not the Jewish aristocracy, but the Roman oppressors under whom Jew and Christian were alike crushed. We think the current view of most commentators, that these "rich men" were "brethren," is entirely inadmissible.

The style is lucid, pointed, rich with figures drawn from nature, and, while flowing much in a clear, didactic current, rises, when the topic demands, into the loftiest and most impetuous torrent of denunciatory eloquence. The purity of its Greek is not so inexplicable a problem as Alford implies. Men endowed with a natural facility for acquiring and using with purity and power a foreign tongue are by no means a rare phenomenon.

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I. The Primitive Christian under trial..... i, 1-18

1. Trials, as conducive to firmness and perfecting Christian character, are a joy..... i, 1-4
2. Wisdom for this Christian perfection, obtainable from God, by faithful prayer, for poor or rich.... i, 5-11
3. Blessedness of enduring temptation; which (temptation) is not from God; from whom the good gift alone..... i, 12-18

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6. Christian Synagogue rejects workless faith as unjustifying..... ii, 14–26
7. Rejects, too, many teachers with untamable and self-contradictory tongues..... iii, 1–12
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THE

EPISTLE OF JAMES.

CHAPTER I.

JAMES,[a] [b]a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, [c]to the twelve tribes [d]which are scattered abroad, greeting. 2 My brethren, [e]count it all joy [f]when

a Acts 12. 17; 15. 13; Gal. 1. 19; 2. 9.—*b* Titus 1. 1.—*c* Acts 26. 7.—*d* John 7. 35; Acts 2. 5; 8. 1; 1 Pet. 1. 1.—*e* Matt. 5. 12; Acts 5. 41; Heb. 10. 34; 1 Pet. 4. 13.—*f* 1 Pet. 1. 6.

CHAPTER I.

I. The Primitive Christian under Trials, 1–18.

1. Trials, as conducive to firmness, are a joy, 1-4.

1. **James**—*Jacobus*, the name which our English language has made *Jacob* in the Old Testament it has capriciously shortened to **James** in the New. **Servant**—Note on Rom. i, 1. **The twelve tribes**—See note on the Δωδεκάφυλον, or *twelve-tribedom*. Acts xxvi, 7. **Which are scattered abroad**—Literally, *which are in the dispersion*. 1 Pet. i, 1. *The dispersion* was a customary term applied to that scattered condition of **the twelve tribes** arising from their repeated captivities. There were four chief dispersions—the Babylonian, the Egyptian, the Syrian, and the western in Greece and Italy. In John vii, 35 is mentioned the *dispersion of the Greeks;* that is, of Jews among the **Greeks**, or *Gentiles*. Josephus says: "The race of the Jews has been plentifully dispersed among the inhabitants of the world, but the largest mingling has been in Syria." Compare the beautiful greeting in 2 Macc. i, 1, from the Jews of Jerusalem to the Jews in Egypt: "The brethren, the Jews that be at Jerusalem and in the land of Judea, wish unto the brethren that are throughout Egypt, health and peace." The infant Jesus was for a brief period among *the dispersion* of Egypt. The two epistles of Peter are also addressed to the "dispersion." Yet these epistles contain nothing implying that they do not suit also to the conditions of Palestine and Jerusalem, as partaking, like the rest, in the tribal disorganization arising from the captivities and the desolations. In modern times, the dispersion of Israel, by a memorable history, has been extended to almost every part of the world.

Yet it is plain that St. James specially addresses this epistle to the Christian Israel in Israel; the *twelve-tribedom* in the *twelve-tribedom*, who had accepted **Jesus Christ**. If the whole dispersion of Jews is nominally, and, in some parts, directly addressed, it is because to his strong Judaic feeling all nominally belong to the Messiah, and all *ought* to accept his epistle as to them. Compare our notes on Matt. x, 5, 6; xix, 28; Acts i, 8. **Greeting**—The word **greeting** is a single Greek word in the infinitive, signifying *to rejoice*, with the phrase *bidding you* to be supplied before it, making a salutation equivalent to our "wishing you joy." The old Saxon word **greeting** signifies *saluting, addressing in friendly and honorary style*. See note, Acts xv, 23.

2. **My brethren**—The plural of *brother* in English is *brothers*, to designate relationship; **brethren**, confraternity. The primitive Hebrews made very extensive applications of the word. Besides descent from common parents it was applied to cousins, countrymen, and fellow Jews. The Rabbies called a born Jew, brother; a proselyte, neighbour; but a Gentile, neither. From the Jews the Christians adopted it as title for all fellow Christians. St. James

ye fall into divers temptations; **3** ᵍKnowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

ᵍ Rom. 5. 3.

4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

repeatedly uses it: iv, 11; v, 7, 8, 19. He also uses **beloved**: i, 16, 19; ii, 5. **Count it all joy**—At the very opening our apostle places his suffering **brethren** upon the highest point of consolation; namely, that height of Christian life in which trials are sure of being antecedents to triumph, and so are sources of **joy.** The Christian hero must not tremble at the danger, but rejoice in anticipation of the victory, and rejoice in the trial as the condition of triumph. To a people in the agony of persecution such an address is a thrilling note of cheer. **All joy**—That is, pure **joy** and nothing else. **Fall**—For even the martyr must not court or rush into trial. He must rather *flee* from persecution. Note Matt. x, 23. Yet when it is forced upon him, such should be his spiritual elevation that the trial shall be an occasion of **joy.** Especially should he rejoice that he is counted worthy to suffer for Christ. Acts v, 41. **Temptations**—There are **divers** or various forms of external things which become internal **temptations.** They may be hostile forms, as persecutions and assaults, (as in Luke viii, 13,) and these tempt to yield through cowardice: or they may be seducing forms, to which we yield by compliance. The moral firmness with which the soul wards off these **divers temptations** and retains its pure integrity is called by St. James ὑπομενή, *persistent firmness*, imperfectly translated **patience.**

3. **Trying**—The putting to, or undergoing, the *test.* **Worketh**—The calling our spiritual and moral power into successful action increases the power, just as the muscle is hardened by exercise. Hence the perfectness of our Christian life is much the result of time, trial, and experience. **Patience**—Firmness against trial. The resisting the temptation and conquering the tempter begets hardihood and solidity. "The proof of the soldier is hard work, and not indulgence; the test of gold and silver is fire."

4. **Let** this firm endurance **have... perfect work,** its completing effect, so that all temptation may be warded off, all sin avoided, a full power of resistance attained, and a complete Christian solidity be established. **Perfect**—The Greek word τέλειος (derived from τελος, *an end*) signifies one finished, or complete. Pagan Greece had her men who were said to be *finished*, or **perfect,** after the standard of pagan virtue. Says Isocrates, (quoted by Bloomfield,) "These I pronounce to be wise and *perfect* men, and to have all the virtues." We say of a man of culture that he is "a *finished* man." St. James accumulates epithets and phrases in asserting the *finished* Christian man. **Entire**—The positive presence of every part requisite to completeness. **Wanting nothing**—The same expressed negatively. Of St. James's **perfect** man we may note: 1. He is not a sudden product, even by faith, but a growth from trial, persistence, and experience. Herein this view varies from, perhaps, but does not contradict, St. John's and St. Paul's. 2. It is a practical perfection, after a human measure, realizable in this life. It should be the steady aim of every Christian. 3. It consists in a degree of spiritual and moral power, through divine aid, of resisting temptation, avoiding sin, and attaining excellence. Just so far as the Christian possesses that power, so far is he the **perfect** Christian. And it is not so much a "second blessing" as a consummating of the first one. 4. Without assuming to decide whether James's perfect man professes perfectness, we do think that the **perfect** man as imaged by him reveals himself to men not so much by profession as by practical life and spirit, by which others spontaneously assign him his character, and thereby ratify his profession, if he makes one.

5 [h]If any of you lack wisdom, [i]let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and [k]it shall be given him. **6** [l]But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that waver-

[h] 1 Kings 3. 9, 11, 12; Prov. 2. 3.——[i] Matt. 7. 7; 21. 22; Mark 11. 24; Luke 11. 9; John 14. 13; 15. 7;

2. Wisdom for such Christian perfection obtainable for all classes by faithful prayer, whether poor or rich, from a gracious God, 5-11.

5. **Lack wisdom**—The **wisdom** necessary to possess and to manifest this perfection. **Ask of God**—For it is the **wisdom** of iii, 17, **that is from above.** He will not attain it by human effort alone, but there is a rich and bountiful source from which it may be obtained. **Liberally**—Literally, *simply*, in contrast with giving with the *upbraiding*, as follows. There are givers that insult and rebuke while they give, and whom it is an agony to approach with a request. And often those who kindly give find it wise to administer lessons of reproof. But to those who ask aright God is ready; there need not be any fear that he will refuse or give with contumely. The more we ask the better he likes us. **It**—The needed **wisdom** for the desired perfection.

6. **In faith**—The hearty and loving trust that God is ready and willing. **Nothing wavering**—The measure of waver is the measure of the want of **faith.** And the want of **faith** arises from the lack of real sympathy and communion with God and real *wish* for the perfect life. A half wish would **ask**, and a half not-wish would contradict and cancel the **ask**; so that nothing is really asked, and the man will be quite as unsteady in his practice as in his prayer. **Wave of the sea**—He is not a sailor, nor even a ship tossed on the waves; he is merely a pure **wave.** One wind blows this **wave** shoreward, and the next one drives it seaward, so that the shore is never reached. Vivid Greek epithets follow to finish the description. **Driven with the wind**—A single word in Greek; *winded, blast-driven.* **Tossed**

eth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. **7** For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. **8** [m]A doubleminded man *is* unstable in all his ways. **9** Let the brother

16. 23.——[k] Jer. 29. 12; 1 John 5. 14, 15.——[l] Mark 11. 24; 1 Tim. 2. 8.——[m] Chap. 4. 8.

—The Greek verb is derived from a word signifying to *throw*, to *cast;* hence, **tossed** or *thrown* by the winds.

7. **Not... receive any thing**—Why should he? He has asked and refused in perhaps equal measure, so that he has not *asked.* As Stier says, "The wavering beggar has not held heart and hand steady enough and long enough for God to put any thing in." **Not receive** is used instead of the above not **shall be given** to indicate that the failure is not in the giver but in the would-be and would-not-be recipient. **Any thing**—That is, of those things he has asked. Many things unasked, as life and its enjoyments, and, perhaps, many other things for which he had **faith,** have been given him. **The Lord**—A word inherited in the Greek from the Septuagint to designate Jehovah, the God of the covenant.

8. **A doubleminded man**—Literally, **a** *two-souled* **man.** A piquant name for the *waverer* of verse 6. To render the sarcasm with more point, some commentators, in view of the fact that **is** is wanting in the Greek, translate, **A** *double-souled* **man, unstable in all his ways.** The **doubleminded man** is one who has two such opposite modes of thought and conduct alternately prevailing as to seem to be two different individuals at different times. He is "unlike himself." So a young Persian explained to Cyrus his two opposite courses of conduct under different influences by saying, "I must have two souls." The word *two-souled* was probably St. James's invention, but it was so expressive as to be adopted by the early Christian writers. So the Apostolic Constitutions say, "Be not two-souled in thy prayer, as to whether it shall be fulfilled or not." And Clement of Rome says,

of low degree [1] rejoice in that he is exalted: **10** But the rich, in that he is made low: because [n] as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. **11** For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

1 Or, *glory.*——*n* Job 14. 2; Psa. 90. 5, 6; 103. 15; 1 Cor. 7. 31; chap. 4. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 24; 1 John 2. 17.

"Wretched are the double-souled, who divide their souls in two"

9. This doublemindedness may arise, oppositely, either from one's poverty or from one's wealth. The poor man is averse from the gospel he approves from discontent, the rich from his pride. St. James sets the two face to face, and gives to each his due counsel. **Low degree**—A poor man, a labourer, or a slave. **Exalted**—As a child of God, heir of immortal hopes. **Made low**—As the poor in this world's goods finds in the gospel an *exaltation*, raising his thoughts above his poverty with its discontent, so **the rich** may find in this same gospel a humbling power, (as well as a humbling association with humble people,) enabling him to feel how transitory is all wealth, how really poor he is without a better foundation. In this lowliness he may **rejoice,** or *glory*, for it gives him an abiding riches infinitely more valuable than this world's fading wealth. **He shall** (will) **pass away**—That is, without the blessed being **made low** by the gospel. His earthly wealth is vanishing as a fading flower under the sun-stroke. But his being **made low** by the gospel has brought him an immortal life, and an inheritance of an eternal patrimony. The humble poor being thus exalted, and the proud rich being humbled, both stand upon the same blessed gospel level upon which they may pray for the **wisdom** by which perfection may be attained. We prefer this view to the interpretation of Huther and Alford, according to which there is a contrast between the humble Christian and the wicked and withering **rich** man. The **made low** of this **rich** man is certainly a gospel humbleness into which the **rich** man is brought and may *glory*, as a salvation from the fate pictured in the words that follow. Even in our Saviour's day there was a **rich** man to entomb him. And the other view pushes our apostle into an apparent Ebionism by which the being a **rich** man is in itself a sin. Note on Luke xvi, 19.

11. Now and then **the rich** man found this glorious lowliness and became a Christian; but **the rich** of St. James's day and locality was generally a persecutor, (ii, 5,) and an oppressor, (note on v, 1–6.) Hence in this verse, with a vividness akin to the last quoted passage, St. James paints the evanescence of the proud and oppressive millionaire. The imagery is borrowed mostly from Isa. xl, 6–8, where the fading character of our earthly humanity is described. **Is**—The Greek has all the verbs in this verse in the past tense, so as to make the description in fact a pictorial narrative. *The sun no sooner rose... withered... fell... perished.* **Burning heat**—The Greek word for **burning heat,** καύσων, (from καίω, *to burn*,) often in the Septuagint designates the east wind, which, sweeping over the burning sands, brings a heat terribly scorching to all vegetation. Here it designates simply the burning power of the tropical or semi-tropical sun. **The grass**—Pasturage, including all herbage, especially that supplying food for animals. **The flower**—The bloom, the flourish. **Grace**—Becomingness. **Fashion**—Literally, *face*, aspect. Translate, *the becomingness of its aspect.* **Fade**—Literally, *wither;* a word applicable to a flower, transferable to dying man. **Ways**—Modes, plans, and purposes of life. It is to be noted that St. James here describes, not the vanishing of the riches from the man, but the vanishing of the man from his riches. Human wealth survives its possessor. Human things are often more permanent than human beings. Happy the rich man who passes from an earthly to a heav-

12 °Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive ᵖthe crown of life, ᵠwhich the Lord hath promised to them that love him. **13** Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with ² evil, neither tempteth he any man: **14** But every man is tempted,

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o Job 5. 17; Prov. 3. 11, 12; Heb. 12. 5; Rev. 3. 19.——*p* 1 Cor. 9. 25; 2 Tim. 4. 8; chap. 2. 5; 1 Pet. 5. 4; Rev. 2. 10.——*q* Matt. 10. 22; 19. 28, 29; chap. 2. 5.——2 Or, *evils.*

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enly patrimony. He makes, perhaps, the best of both worlds. Such a man is described in the next verse.

3. Blessedness of enduring temptation; which (temptation) comes not from God; from whom is the good alone, 12-18.

12. **Blessed is the man**—Whether **of low degree** or **rich. Endureth**—Who not only *suffers*, undergoes, but **endureth**; that is, bears up against, and conquers **temptation. For**—It is the most glorious of triumphs. He it is who may (verse 2) **count it all joy. Tried**—Proved true by the tempting test. **Crown of life**—He becomes more than a millionaire; he receives the **crown** of a heavenly prince—**a crown of life**—from which he will never **pass** by death, and which will never wither from him. The phrase **crown of life** does not signify a **crown** possessed of or imbued with **life**; but a crown consisting **of life. The life,** or glorious immortality, is itself the **crown.**

13. But while the true endurance of temptation is thus a triumph and a **joy,** St. James utters no eulogy on temptation itself. It comes not from a divine tempter. This he denies in behalf, not of our responsibility, but of the holy honour of **God.** God has, indeed, made life a scene of probation. He has made us with susceptibilities to incitement to evil from finite evil agencies. But it is from the finite, and not from the holy Infinite, that the specific temptation as a purposed allurement to evil comes. God means for us a life of successful trial; the tempter means failure and ruin in the trial. **Let no man say**—Rather, *let no tempted one* **say. I am tempted of God**—Quoted in the utterer's own words, implying that there were errorists who declared outright that we have above us an evil Infinite. Others, as Huther well remarks, disown the responsibility for wickedness, by imputing its causation to God. So in *Homer's Iliad*, "But I am not the cause, but Jupiter and Fate." And in the comic poet, Plautus, "God was the impeller to me." And Terence, "What if some god willed this?" So the Gnostics, descending from Simon Magus, held all sins to be predestinated, and were strenuously opposed by Justin Martyr and the early Church, as thereby making God responsible for sin. Predestination, as Pressensé truly says, was viewed by the early Church as a heresy. To this saying our apostle opposes a true analysis of the inward nature of our temptations and yieldings to sin. **Tempted of evil**—For he knows its nature, and is in unchanging will opposed to it. **Neither tempteth he**—Abraham is quoted as a case in which God tempted a man. That is only verbally true. The devil tempts us that he may bring us to evil; God tries, that he may bring us to manifest faith and triumph. It depends upon us whether we shall make it a fatal temptation or a triumphant trial and a **joy.** Our apostle counsels us to make it **all joy,** verse 2.

14. We are now told how temptation does come. St. James does not here affirm a devilish tempter, nor does he deny the existence of such. He only shows how the coming temptation reaches us through our susceptibilities. **Lust**—The Greek word *επιθυμία* is often used in the New Testament in a good sense, and derives its evil meaning from the connexion. It means the *predisposition*, the *susceptibility*, to good or evil. In itself, as an undirected, unperverted susceptibility, it is innocent of **sin. Drawn away**—Or, more properly, **drawn** *out;* when his susceptibility is **drawn** towards the wrong. **Enticed**—As a fish by the bait. The yielding of the will to the incitement commences the **sin.** That is, when the

[r] when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. **15** Then [s] when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, [t] bringeth forth death. **16** Do not err, my beloved brethren. **17** [u] Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, [v] with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. **18** [w] Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, [x] that we should be a kind of [y] firstfruits of his creatures.

[r] Gen. 6. 5; 8. 21; Josh. 7. 21, 24; Matt. 5. 28. —[s] Job 15. 35; Psa. 7. 14.—[t] Rom. 6. 21, 23. —[u] John 3. 27; 1 Cor. 4. 7.

[v] Num. 23. 19; 1 Sam. 15. 29; Mal. 3. 6; Rom. 11. 29.—[w] John 1. 13; 3. 3; 1 Cor. 4. 15; 1 Pet. 1. 23.—[x] Eph. 1. 12.—[y] Jer. 2. 3; Rev. 14. 4.

incitement towards evil, which in English is truly called **lust**, induces the volitional *consent*, then responsibility for actual **sin** commences.

15. **Conceived—Lust**, by consent of will, becomes a harlot mother; she **bringeth forth sin**; **sin**, when **finished** by the free volition, becomes guilt, and guilt is **death**. **Death** is the grandchild of **lust**, or perverted susceptibility. Eternal **death** is the deepening and perpetuity of spiritual death.

16. **Do not err**—A solemn warning against the current doctrine of errorists, that God is the evil source of evil. Our apostle declares that God is the invariable author of **good**.

17. Literally, **every good** *giving* **and every perfect gift**. Both the act of *giving* and the **gift** are named, one as **good** and the other as **perfect**. **Father of lights**—Physically, he is **Father** of the material luminaries which beam upon us **from above**; spiritually, he is **Father** of all the heavenly and blessed **lights** which make the world of our soul luminous, and guide us to the land of **lights**. Of these spiritual **lights** the heavenly luminaries are a symbol. **No variableness**—So that he truly gives us good alone. **Shadow of turning**—He has no change, no, not even the **shadow** of a change. The revolving **shadow** on the dial-face reveals to us the truth that the firmamental **lights** are ever revolving; but of God there is **no shadow of turning**.

18. **Of his own will**—That is, not by any changeful caprice or **shadow** of inconstancy. **Begat he us**—By a regenerative begetting. **With the word of truth**—The preached gospel was the external instrument by which he regenerated us. **Firstfruits**—The first gatherings of the harvest were by the Hebrews gratefully consecrated to God. Hence the word **firstfruits** symbolically indicates pre-eminent excellence and divine consecration. We are regenerated by divine, unchanging will, through the promulgated **word**, that among the **creatures** of God we may be the consecrated and truly **first** in rank and value. By creation man is **first** among lower **creatures**; by regeneration and consecration the sons of God are **first** even among human **creatures**. **Kind of**—That is, not literal **firstfruits**, but a figurative sort. This **firstfruits** has no reference to time; and hence cannot indicate the earlier Christian converts as compared with the later, (as Alford,) and so is no proof of the early writing of this epistle.

The immutability of God's regenerative **will** is none the less conditional, and our apostle will next show how we must meet the conditions. It is by due attention to, and reception of, the regenerative **word**.

II. Within the Christian synagogue: the proper temper, behaviour, and faith there, i, 19–iii, 18.

1. No loquacity nor irritation, but candid hearing, 19–21.

To understand the emphasis laid by St. James in the rest of this chapter on moderation of language and candid listening, we must conceive something of a picture of discussions *in the Synagogues*, (see note on ii, 2,) in which replies of cavillers could interrupt the Christian preacher, 1 Cor. xiv, 27–33. The epistle, in its address, comprehends not only Christian Jews, but all Jews inclined to read and listen, and hence the importance of impressing the whole with the necessity of decency, candour, and readiness in a spirit of meekness to

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, [z] let every man be swift to hear, [a] slow to speak, [b] slow to wrath: **20** For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. **21** Wherefore [c] lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, [d] which is able to save your souls.

22 But [e] be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. **23** For [f] if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

[z] Eccl. 5. 1.—[a] Prov. 10. 19; 17. 27; Eccl. 5. 2. —[b] Prov. 14. 17; 16. 32; Eccl. 7. 9.—[c] Col. 3. 8; 1 Pet. 2. 1.—[d] Acts 13. 26; Rom. 1. 16; 1 Cor. 15. 2; Eph. 1. 13; Titus 2. 11; Heb. 2. 3; 1 Pet. 1. 9.—[e] Matt. 7. 21; Luke 6. 46; 11. 28; Rom. 2. 13; 1 John 3. 7.—[f] Luke 6. 47, &c.; see chap. 2. 14, &c.

receive the word of the gospel. Inquirers must calmly listen, they must learn in order to practice; but especially must they *bridle the tongue*, or else the pretences and attempts at religion are futile.

19. **Wherefore**—The true reading seems to be, *Ye know;* that is, of all this you are aware; *but* (Greek, δε) **let every man,** etc. Same **ye know** in Eph. v, 5, and Heb xii, 17. In view of the fact that it is by **the word of truth** that we are regenerated into **firstfruits,** let us give careful heed to that **word.** And so our attention to that **word** with candour, (verses 14–21,) practical obedience, (22–25,) and self-control, (26,) is discussed until we arrive at **pure religion,** verse 27. **Let**—An exhortation to a candid, unvociferous, unexcited hearing of the **word of truth. Swift...slow**—A frequent antithesis among Greek writers to express readiness and averseness. The importance and brief opportunity of the **truth** demand quick and earnest listening. It is too valuable to be slighted, and tomorrow may be too late. **Slow to speak**—Without hasty and captious interruptions; such as the Christian preacher, as St. Paul, often encountered from unbelieving auditors. The old philosophers said, that men have but one tongue and two ears, and so should speak little and hear much. **Wrath** is the disputant's angry excitement against the **truth.** He first is rash **to speak,** and then warms as he talks into **wrath.** The **wrath** here spoken of is that not of promulgators of the **truth,** but of cavilling hearers, to whom it is offered. Hence they are, next verse, exhorted to **receive the word.** For this epistle is addressed to the **twelve tribes**—not only those who are Christians, but those who should be so.

20. **Righteousness of God**—God's righteousness, prescribed by him to man. Note on Romans i, 17. Man's **wrath** works not in man the **righteousness** designed and enjoined by God.

21. **Filthiness**—Ribaldry and indecency against the gospel and its professors and teachers. It often designates **filthiness** of apparel. Hence, when young Wesley, at Oxford, was walking with the pious Moravian, (Peter Böhler,) and was inclined to shrink from the ribaldry of the students, Peter said, with a smile, "My brother, it does not even stick to your clothes." **Superfluity**—Over-abundance, such as the **wrath of man** could fluently pour forth. **Naughtiness**—Malignity. **Receive**—The advice is to James' unconverted brethren. **Ingrafted word**—That gospel, **word of truth,** (verse 18,) which, as a graft produces a new tree, produces a regenerate man. **Save**—Instrumentally, as a means, and conditionally, by being *received.*

2. Being not hearers only, but doers of the word, 22-27.

22. It is not enough to be **a hearer,** or a *receiver* of the saving **word** delivered in the synagogue, and then go out and transgress it in the world. By considering that listening to be sufficient, and omitting to be also **doers,** we glide into a *self-deception.* We imagine we are quite good, while in fact we are unsaved. Going to church, reading the Bible, and yet neglecting a holy life, is a delusive course.

23. **Natural face**—Literally, the face of his birth; the face he was born

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth [g] what manner of man he was. **25** But [h] whoso looketh into the perfect [i] law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, [k] this man shall be

g Judg. 8. 13; Matt. 8. 27.——*h* 2 Cor. 3. 18.——*i* Chap. 2. 12.——*k* John 13. 17.——3 Or, *doing*.

with, and which he had been in the habit of seeing all his life; and so the stranger that he should forget it the moment he ceases looking at it. **Glass**—Mirror. See note, 1 Cor. xiii, 12.

24. **Forgetteth**—A curious and inexplicable fact, that, however clearly we behold ourself **in the glass**, we retain no distinct impression of our own face. If walking down the street he could meet himself, he would not, by the countenance, recognise himself. So the man who beholds his own spiritual character and moral destiny in the **word**, as in a **glass**, may pass away and retain no true impression. A most beautiful illustration of our moral nature from a physiological fact familiar to all, yet seldom noted.

25. **Looketh into**—The expressive Greek is, *stoops down to* **the law**. The man is not now standing and transiently looking into a mirror; he is bending down and poring steadily, as it were, into a book, just as the cherubim stooped down on the ark to look at the decalogue. **Law of liberty**—That **law** which, when studied in its own spirit and with gracious aids, is obeyed with such glad spontaneity that the most perfect obedience is the most perfect **liberty**. Note on Matt. xi, 30. This is a **perfect law**; absolutely **perfect** in itself, having God for its author and **perfect** right for its essence and nature, with perfect obligation on us to obey it. And **perfect** is he who perfectly obeys it. **Continueth**—To look and meditate therein, instead of **straightway** going his **way**. The holy volume stirs his heart and attracts his intense study. **Not a forgetful hearer**—For what so stirs, fascinates, and fixes him, writes itself indelibly on his memory. Nor

blessed in his [3] deed. **26** If any man among you seem to be religious, and [l] bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain. **27** Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, [m] To visit the fatherless and widows in their

l Psa. 34. 13; 39. 1; 1 Peter 3. 10.——*m* Isa. 1. 16, 17; 58. 6, 7; Matt. 25. 36.

is it in him a mere passive process. He determines to be **not forgetful**; for what stirs his heart is determined by his will, so that he becomes **a doer of the word. Deed**—Rather, **his** continuous **doing**.

26. **Among you**—Our apostle is still in the synagogue where disputants are brandishing their sharp tongues. **Religious**—Rather, as the Greek signifies, **worshipful**; strict and regular in formal worship, a due performer of synagogue service. The word emphasizes the external rite without excluding the internal devotion. *Ritualism*, in a good sense, nearly expresses it. **Bridleth not his tongue**—Which is a steed that needs the *bridle*, especially in the heat of emulous debate, religious or otherwise. For the **tongue** is the vocal organ of the heart, giving expression to the outcome of the true character. Our doings and our speakings tell what we are. Our apostle, in 22–25, has discussed our *doings;* he now deals with our speakings. **Deceiveth his own heart**—By making himself believe that he is religious when he is only ritualistic. **Vain**—Emphatical Greek inversion: *of that man vain is the ritualism.* His worshipful doings are all undone by his wicked sayings. Our words in their full import decide our true moral state.

27. **Pure religion**—A *worshipfulness* **pure** from these synagogue blemishes. In order to set the quarrelsome ritualism in its true light James contrasts with it a service of the most practical nature. It is a pure worshipfulness, not that quarrels, but that pours forth deeds of beneficence. **Before**—As viewed by. **God and the Father**—More correctly, *our* **God and Father**. Pure service, as our **God and Father**

affliction, [n]*and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

CHAPTER II.

MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [a]*the Lord* of glory, with [b]respect of persons. **2** For if there come unto your [1]assembly a man with a gold ring, in [c]goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man [d]in vile raiment; **3** And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here [2]in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit

n Rom. 12. 2; chap. 4. 4; 1 John 5. 18.—*a* 1 Cor. 2. 8.—*b* Lev. 19. 15; Deut. 1. 17; 16. 19; Prov. 24. 23; 28. 21; Matt. 22. 16; Jude 16.

1 Greek, *synagogue*.—*c* Matthew 11. 8, 9.—*d* Isaiah 64. 6; Zechariah 3. 3, 4.—2 Or, *well*, or, *seemly*.

judges, **is this**, etc. **Unspotted from the world**—The Christian is like a man walking through freshly painted objects, liable, without the greatest care, to being *spotted*. On every side are examples of vice and temptations to compliance which demand all his care, aided by grace from above, to make his words and his works consistent with a pure profession. Our apostle does not limit all **pure religion** to benevolence towards orphans and **widows**; he only contrasts that with the religion of captious talk. But, taking in this closing clause, all religion is comprehended.

CHAPTER II.

3. No obsequiousness to rich incomers to the Christian synagogue, 1-4.

1. **My brethren**—The apostle is still administering lessons to the *Synagogue* of believers. In the first chapter he reproves their disputatiousness; in the present, their courting the **rich. Of glory**—Omitting the Italic words, the Greek order is, **our Lord Jesus Christ of glory**, in which the author does not suppose that inserting the identifying name **Jesus Christ** prevents **of glory** from belonging to **Lord**, so as to make **Lord of glory**, namely, **Jesus Christ. Faith** in so glorious a **Lord** is not **in** consistency with **respect of persons. Respect of persons** (see note on Acts x. 34,) means to regard a man for his rank, personal appearance, or any other reason than his true deserts or value. All men are equal before the **Lord of glory**; and therefore, in his Church, **rich** and **poor** are equally valuable in the sight of Him who died for all.

2. **If**—St. James puts the case with an **if.** Yet he graphically narrates it in the (*aoristic*) past historic tense, as i, 10, 11, (where see note,) as a transaction that had happened, (note on Heb. vi, 4–6,) and so might customarily happen. **Unto your assembly**—Or, as it is in the Greek, **your** SYNAGOGUE. See note on Matt. iv, 23. The Jewish-Christian conservatism of St. James is strongly marked by his use of this word. The pentecostal Church continued to share in the Jewish service, and it is probable that Jewish synagogues sometimes were converted into Christian churches. Acts iii, 1; iv. 1. The word, then, may have long been retained mong **the twelve tribes** of i, 1. There were five synagogues of foreign Jews in Jerusalem. Acts vi, 9. In the Apocalypse the word is used of heretics. Rev. ii, 9; iii, 9. And in Heb. x, 25, we have *episynagogues*. St. Ignatius applies the word to Christian churches, and Alford quotes from the post-apostolic "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs" the phrase, "in the *synagogues* of the Gentiles." The term here indicates that the epistle was written after Christian houses of worship were established and customary. **A man**—He may be a Christian, or he may not; that does not vary the principle. But verses 6, 7 clearly show that such are not to be supposed Christians, but really persecutors and blasphemers of Christ. The visitor's apparel, though doubtless conspicuously different, is not set in contrast with that of the rest of the assembly, but in contrast with that of the **poor man. Gold ring**—Literally, **a man** *golden-ringed, in splendid dress.*

3, 4. **Say**—Huther well contrasts the

here under my footstool: **4** Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, [e]Hath not God chosen the poor of this world [f]rich in faith, and heirs of [g]the kingdom [g]which he hath promised to them that love him? **6** But [h]ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, [i]and draw you before

[e] John 7. 48; 1 Cor. 1. 26, 28.——[f] Luke 12. 21; 1 Tim. 6. 18; Rev. 2. 9.——[g] Or, *that*,——[g] Exod. 20. 6; 1 Sam. 2. 30; Prov. 8. 17; Matt. 5. 3; Luke 6. 20; 12. 32; 1 Cor. 2. 9; 2 Tim. 4. 8; chap. 1. 12.——[h] 1 Cor. 11. 22.——[i] Acts 13. 50; 17. 6; 18. 12; chap. 5. 6.

opposite speeches: **Thou...thou... sit... stand... here... there... in a good place...under** (rather, *at*) **my footstool.** The dignified speaker has a **footstool,** and seems to be an official of the *synagogue.* It seems to be a regularly officered Church, with an edifice, and a furnishing; all indicating a mature period. The two clauses beginning with **sit, stand,** with an **or** between them, form not two, but one directive speech. **Partial in yourselves**—A much debated interpretation. Huther gives a large number of explications, all of which he justly rejects because they do not give the exact meaning of the Greek verb here used, which usually signifies to *doubt*, to *hesitate*, or, as used by St. James in i, 6, to waver. But Alford, following Huther and others, adopts the first of these two definitions, and interprets it of a *doubt* of their own Christianity! He gives the following far-fetched paraphrase: "Did you not, in making such distinction between rich and poor, become of the number of those who doubt respecting their faith?" But certainly this discrimination was no doubt of the Christian faith! If, however, our English version had translated it as in i, 6, *waver*, they would have furnished the true thought. If ye so discriminated, did you not *waver* (from the straight course)? The writer charges, that, under the fascinations of the gorgeous attire, they were induced to veer and vibrate from Christian integrity. **Judges** (possessed) **of evil thoughts**—The **evil thoughts** were the inward quality of the **judges.** They became evil-thoughted **judges.** The word **judges** is used, not in a judicial, but in an opinionative or discriminative sense, and might be rendered *discriminators.* Translate the whole, then, **If** ye have done all this, *have ye not wavered (as Christians) and become evil-thoughted discriminators?*

4. For the rich are generally persecutors and blasphemers, 5-7.

5. **Hearken...brethren**—In this earnest expostulation (5–7) St. James makes two points: 1. The poor are the **chosen,** and so wrong is done to them. 2. The rich are the oppressors and blasphemers, and so a wicked preference is given to them. **Chosen**—The (aorist) tense, *Did not God choose?* that is, (Gr. middle,) prefer for himself. The objects of his choice present three objective characteristics; they are **poor** in worldly goods, but (antithetically) **rich in faith,** and even **heirs** (heightening the antithesis) of a future royalty. The very nature of the antithesis shows the inadmissibility of Huther's interpolating (followed by Alford) the words *to be*, and reading, chosen *to be* **rich in faith.** This *to be*, might just as authoritatively be interposed before **poor,** and so render, *has not God chosen them to be* **poor?** The worldly poverty, the spiritual richness, and the celestial heirship, all precede this choice, which is simply the divine preference in contrast with this, their human, rejection in the *synagogue.* God chose, but men (next verse) **despised** them. **The kingdom**—The future **kingdom** *of heaven*, as being yet subject of *promise.*

6. **Ye**—Unlike God. **Despised**—Same (aorist) tense as **chosen**=*chose.* While God *chose*, ye **despised.** Both refer to the same objects and point of time. **The poor**—Singular number; **the poor** man in the above picture. **Rich men oppress you**—It is clear from this that it is not Christian **rich men**

the judgment seats? **7** Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, [k] Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: **9** But [l] if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. **10** For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, [m] he is guilty of all. **11** For [4] he that said, [n] Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art

[k] Lev. 19. 18; Matt. 22. 39; Rom. 13. 8, 9; Gal. 5. 14; 6. 2.—[l] Verse 1.

[m] Deut. 27. 26; Matt. 5. 19; Gal. 3. 10.—[4] Or, *that* law *which said*.—[n] Exod. 20. 13, 14.

the apostle condemns. **Rich** here is an epithet for men of persecuting power, whether Jews or pagans. Not their wealth but their oppressiveness that made them guilty. See note on v, 6. **Draw**—Greek, *drag*, a term of violence. **Judgment seats**—To rob them by unjust lawsuits, or to punish them for being deserters from Judaism.

7. **That worthy name**—Christ. **Called**—This probably alludes (as do 1 Pet. iv, 14 and 16) to the name *Christian*, and indicates a time in which the name, starting from Antioch, had become general throughout the **tribes.**

5. And violating the divine law on this or any one point breaks the whole law, 8-13.

8. Our apostle here states and denies an excuse of theirs, that their treatment of the **rich** was accordant with the law of love. **The royal law**—The golden rule, called **royal** because, perhaps, first clearly proclaimed by the **royal** Jesus; or, more probably, because it is the supreme law which comprehends the entire law over the relations of men to men. **Do well**—Your conduct is right **if** it accord with the **royal law.** But the question is, *Does it* accord with that **law?** He denies it, (9–13,) declares that it is such a transgression as makes them condemnable by **the whole law,** being a violation of the law of **mercy,** (verse 13,) namely, **mercy** to the **poor man,** so cruelly slighted.

9. **Respect to persons**—Honouring the wicked because **rich** and oppressive, spurning the poor in spite of piety and humbleness. **Commit sin**—The reverse of **do well. Convinced**—Detected, convicted. **The law**—The **royal law,** which enjoins dealing according to merit, and, therefore, **the whole law.**

10. **For**—Refuting the claim that their fault was slight and venial. **Offend in one point**—Small as that **point** appears to you. **Guilty of all**—The **royal law** is a unit; you cannot violate a *part* of it alone. There may be different degrees of heinousness of violation, but if you have done a loveless act no part of the law acquits you; the whole law of love has been violated, and condemns you.

11. **For**—It is not meant that you have committed each and every mentionable act of transgression. The ten commandments are but so many specifications under the one law of love; they are but specifications of various ways in which that one **whole law** can be violated. Every specific violation is a violation of that one **whole law. He**—The same one undivided divine Authority is promulgator of **the** one **law,** which so branches into ten specifications. Violating any one specification impinges against that entire authority. It denies the supremacy of God. It is treason against the government of the universe. **No adultery**—You may be as chaste as "the icicle in Dian's temple," yet, if you murder, your virtue will not save you. There is to be no balancing of account with heaven between your vices and your virtues. Every vice breaks **the whole law.**

A modern American poem described a western steamboat pilot who closed a life of profligacy with being blown up in order to save the lives of the passengers on board his boat. It assumes that his self-sacrifice in death would atone for his profligate

become a transgressor of the law. **12** So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by [o] the law of liberty. **13** For [p] he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath

[o] Chap. 1. 25.—[p] Job 22. 6, &c.; Prov. 21. 13; Matt. 6. 15; 18. 35; 25. 41, 42.

showed no mercy; and [q] mercy [s] rejoiceth against judgment.

14 [r] What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works?

[q] 1 John 4. 17, 18.—[s] Or, *glorieth*.—[r] Matt. 7. 26; chap. 1. 23.

life, and concludes by declaring that Christ would not severely judge "the man who died for men." But the death was scarcely less profligate than the life. It was simply that same desperate recklessness of life, acting under an impulse of professional pride, as he would show in a fray for supremacy or advantage in any other matter. No such act could atone for the crimes against temperance, chastity, the rights of his fellow men, and the laws of God, which, as described in the poem itself, formed the staple of this bad hero's existence. The writing of such poetry is as profligate and demoralizing as the life it heroizes.

12. **Speak...do**—The two great departments of external Christian morality; the manifestations of the character of the internal man. They must **so speak and do** in all respects, and especially in their dealings with **the rich** and **the poor**; for it must be remembered that that subject is still in sight. **The law of liberty**—As given by a **royal** lawgiver, and ruling with **a royal** authority, it is a **royal law**; as obeyed with a free, spontaneous heart, it is a **law of liberty**; as enjoining and inspiring universal comity, it is a **law of love. Judged**—For this **law** not only requires **love,** but judges and condemns the want of it as evidenced by the **speak** and **do. This** want they evidence in this case by their **respect of persons.** They do not deal with **the poor** according to the evangelical **law of liberty.**

13. **For**—Deep and solemn motive for the **so speak and do. Mercy**—Compassion or tenderness for the lowly, the unfortunate, or the guilty. This **mercy** would have inspired the Churches to honour and cherish, rather than to **despise, the poor. Judgment without mercy—The law of love** will be a law of condemnation; and in the day of **judgment** pure retribution **without mercy** will be the order of the day. **Mercy,** if exercised by us, not only does not condemn us, but it triumphs over and **rejoiceth against judgment,** and brings us acquittal and salvation.

6. The Christian synagogue rejects workless faith as unjustifying, 14–26.

St. James now inflexibly chases his **brethren** out of their last refuge and excuse for their sin toward **the poor.** Our works, say they, do, indeed, violate **the law** a little, but then we are justified by faith, and the law will not punish us for subordinate negligences. In other words, we are Christians, and will be saved in spite of our sins. This is antinomianism; and it often appears in various forms, practical and doctrinal, in the Church. Its effect is, as St. Paul says, to "make Christ the minister of sin," and to demoralize Christianity. In his Epistle to the Romans Paul emphasizes the doctrine of justification by faith alone; yet guards against all antinomianism by insisting that it is a faith from which a holy life must result. Rom. vi, 1, 2. St. James, on the contrary, emphasizes the necessity of works—that is, a holy life—but secures the fact that the works, in order to be a true holy life, must spring from a living faith. Paul says, You are justified by a work-begetting faith; James says, You are justified by faith-begotten works. They disagree, not in doctrine, but in the emphasis they lay on the different parts of the doctrine.

14. **Hath faith...not works**—A believer, but not a righteous doer; a Christian, but not a conscientious liver; pious, but not honest. He holds to a humble Christianity, but *despises* **the poor,** and is obsequious to the persecutor.

can faith save him? **15** [s]If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, **16** And [t]one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? **17** Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being [6]alone. **18** Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith [7]without thy works, [u]and I will show thee my faith by my works. **19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: [v]the devils also believe, and tremble. **20** But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? **21** Was not Abraham our father justified by works, [w]when he had offered Isaac

s See Job 31. 19, 20; Luke 3. 11.—*t* 1 John 3. 18; Job 22. 7, 9; Prov. 3. 27, 28.—6 Greek, *by itself.*—7 Some copies read, *by thy works.*

u Chapter 3. 13.—*v* Matthew 8. 29; Mark 1. 24; 5. 7; Luke 4. 34; Acts 16. 17; 19. 15.—*w* Genesis 22. 9, 12.

15. **If**—An illustrative case, in which a fellow Christian is to be supplied with necessaries of life. The firm faith that he will be supplied with food without accordant action will leave him to starvation. So a sentimental belief in all the charities, virtues, pieties, and moralities, will do no good to the world or to the believer until resolved into action.

17. **Dead**—It has no vital existence, **being alone**, and not embodied in good doing.

18. **May** (wisely) **say**—That is, the advocate of **works** evidencing his **faith**, may say to the mere holder of **faith** without **works**, thus. **Show**... **without**...**works**—And prove thyself an antinomian. **And I**...**faith by**...**works**—And prove myself a duty-doing believer. I hold faith and duty in correspondence and symmetry with each other. My **faith** inspires my **works**, and my **works** evidence my **faith.**

Works are rightly said to justify a man by evidencing his faith. Yet this is not all. Works are a direct justification of faith before God. According to Paul it is by the act of submitting and self-consecrating faith alone that a man comes into reconciliation and justification with God. But the condition of the continuance of that state of justification is not faith alone, but faith with works correspondent to that faith. And those works justify, not only indirectly, as *evidence* of the trueness of the faith, but *directly*, being graciously accepted by God as works of righteousness and true holiness.

19. **Thou**—Addressed to a monotheist, probably a Jew, who held that all Jews would be saved by their Mosaic belief. **One God**—The prime article in which the Jew differed from the polytheist. It is to be noted here that St. James addresses a Jew as included in the **twelve tribes** to whom the epistle is written. **Thou doest well**—So far, good! But it helps very little for salvation, as the next sentence shows. **The devils**—The demons, or evil spirits, subordinate to the one devil, or Satan. Note on 1 Cor. x, 20. **Believe**—They are as orthodox on that point as the Jews. Yet their orthodoxy, their monotheistic **faith** alone, does not save them. We have defined justifying faith (note on Rom. iii, 22) to be that unity of intellect, heart, and will, by which a man perfectly surrenders himself to Christ for salvation. It is the will element in this faith from which due works result. Without it faith becomes mere intellective *belief*, and, like that of the devils, is ineffective and **dead. Tremble**—Shudder. Their knowledge of God and of his character induces a dread of a future beyond the judgment day.

20. **Wilt thou**—*Willest* **thou?** for it is a matter of *will.* **Thou** canst know if it is thy *will* to know. **Vain man**—Literally, *empty* **man**; vacant of the truth he might know.

21. **Abraham**—As Abraham is the instance discussed by St. Paul, (Rom. iv, 1–13 and Gal. iii, 6–9,) we deem it very probable, but by no means certain, that James has Paul's statements

his son upon the altar? **22** [8] Seest thou [x] how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? **23** And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, [y] Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called [z] the Friend of God. **24** Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. **25** Likewise also [a] was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way? **26** For [b] as the body without the [9] spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

8 Or, *Thou seest.*—*x* Heb. 11. 17.—*y* Gen. 15. 6; Rom. 4. 3; Gal. 3. 6.—*z* 2 Chron. 20. 7; Isa. 41. 8.—*a* Josh. 2. 1; Heb. 11. 31.—*b* Job 34. 14, 15; Psa. 104. 29.—9 Or, *breath.*

in view, and purposes to give, not a disputation in order to refute them, but a counter statement in order to correct those who overstated Paul's. **Our father**—Namely, of both unconverted and converted Jew. **Offered**—But did not fulfil the *offering* by actual sacrifice. **Upon**—Or *at.*

22. **Faith wrought...works**—As remarked in our notes on the passages referred to in our last note, Abraham was a believer years before the offering of Isaac, and justified. That act of self-surrendering faith by which a man *enters* into reconciliation with God was performed years before. Yet every signal external act of faith was a renewal of the first. Abraham's justification came, as Paul says, from his faith *alone.* Yet the faith which alone justifies is never really alone: it ever combines with works. **Faith made perfect**—Had Abraham died at the instant of his first justification he would have been completely justified by faith alone. But his **faith** would have wanted its proper counterpart in actual works, and so have been in a sense *imperfect.* Yet it was saving in its quality, being of such a nature and power as would generate works but for the cessation of life. In other words, it was such a self-surrender to, trust in, and oneness of heart and spirit with, God, as would have poured forth works in accord with God's will. Or, to vary the statement, on condition of such self-surrendering faith a full flow of the divine Spirit is poured into the heart, inspiring a life and course of action accordant with the divine will. When, then, this internal **faith** is answered to by the correspondent act and course of life, it becomes completed, **made perfect.**

23. **Fulfilled**—By the external act of **faith** the **works** the faith received a consummation, a perfection, whereby the very Scripture declaring his justification by faith, was *visibly* fulfilled.

24. **By works...justified**—Not that by merit-work (except so far as faith itself is a work, note, Rom. iii, 27) a man is first brought into justification. But he is justified by work as an external completion of his faith. **Not by faith only**—For if the faith be alone, and without the working element of faith, namely, the hearty will for work, it is mere speculative faith, as above said, and so **dead** and unjustifying.

25. **Rahab the harlot**—See note, Heb. xi, 31. **Received the messengers**—An act resulting from her **faith** in Jehovah, God of Israel, performed bravely in spite of danger, terminating in her incorporation into the people of God and into the line of the Messiah. Note, Matt. i, 2. As it was through her memorable adhesion to Israel that Israel came into Canaan, her **faith** was a hinging fact in Israel's history, and so commemorated with great interest.

26. **As the body...so faith**—Reciprocally, we may make **faith** the **body** and **works** the **spirit** necessary to its life; or **works** the **body** of which **faith** is the **spirit.** **Faith** is the dead body without works; for it is truly without the active will-power, without which it is the mere **dead** speculative belief, like that of the demons in verse 19.

St. James's paragraph here on faith and works has, from its marked an-

tithesis to Paul's language of the same point, furnished a fruitful topic for discussion to commentators and theologians. Huther, in a brief excursus, summarizes its history. Before the Reformation no difficulty of reconciliation was felt. Luther opened the query with a strong and repeated rejection of the epistle from the canon as contradictory to Paul, unapostolic and unauthentic. The consistency of James with Paul has, nevertheless, been recognised by the German scholars, Neander, Wiesinger, and Hengstenberg; but denied by De Wette, Baur, and other rationalists. Huther reconciles the two (as Fletcher of Madeley, in his "Checks," did before him) by saying that Paul speaks of present justification, which is truly by faith, and James of our justification at the day of judgment, which is "according to" our works, as is attested by many Scripture passages. But so far as *time* comes into view this distinction fails; for God's judicial estimate of us is ever *now*, "according to" our present moral state. The final judgment is but the closing public pronunciation of the final sum total of our character. God's present judgment is as much "according to" our works as his final. And in this, our moral sum total under God's adjudication, faith is properly viewed as one of the *works* "according to" which we are judged. And thus we are justified by *works*. And yet this is not precisely the view that St. James in this paragraph presents.

Huther places in contrast the words of the two apostles thus: James says, "By works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (ii, 24.) Paul says, (Gal. ii, 16,) "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by... faith." Again, James, (ii, 21,) "Was not Abraham...justified by works?" and Paul, (Rom. iv, 2,) "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory." In regard to which we remark: (1.) James does not here, or any where else, deny, but does assume, that we are justified by faith. (2.) Nor does he deny that it is faith which *alone*, and in itself, justifies; he only denies that the faith which alone justifies is ever alone and unattended by works. (3.) And even in the alone justifying faith there is a virtual inchoate *work* which (verse 22) requires to be verified and perfected in the consequent external work. Works, therefore, though never justifying without faith, do have, as inhering in faith, an auxiliary justifying effect. And that view Paul never denies, but frequently implies. See our notes on Rom. ii, 6; iii, 27. With Paul it is working faith, faith with work present and prospective in it, that justifies. It is only merit-work that he denies. But so pointedly antithetical are James's propositions to Paul's, that we hold them as intended by him to be the corrective of the effect of Paul's trenchant statements in the mind of the Church. 4. That there was a standing antithesis, without real contradiction, between Paul and James, is evinced by the "from James" of Gal. ii, 12, (where see note, with our note on Acts xv, 6;) and we believe that antithesis is here stated, and was, on James's part, intentional and wise. (5.) How truly James's statements do stand as a perpetual corrective of the antinomianism often inferred from Paul's language in successive periods of the Church, is well illustrated by Wesley's experience with the Moravians, given in our vol. iv, p. 209. So antinomian had they become by implicitly following Luther and overstraining Paul, that he took to expounding James to bring them to the right position. Not one moment do we hesitate to place the words of this illustrious apostle, James of Jerusalem, the brother of the Lord himself, lineal son of David, and hereditary king of the twelve tribes, as coequal in authority with Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. Both were apostles, but neither of the twelve. (6.) All this indicates that the Epistle of James is subsequent to that to the Romans; long enough subsequent for that great epistle to have powerfully influenced the mind of the Church. And this passage, like 2 Pet. iii, 15, 16, is a clear allusion to the doctrinal statements of Paul, implying their perversion by many of his readers.

CHAPTER III.

MY brethren, [a] be not many masters, [b] knowing that we shall receive the greater [1] condemnation. **2** For [c] in many things we offend all. [d] If any man offend not in word, [e] the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body. **3** Behold, [f] we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may

a Matt. 23. 8, 14; Rom. 2. 20, 21; 1 Pet. 5. 3.—*b* Luke 6. 37.—1 Or, *judgment*.—*c* 1 Kings 8. 46; 2 Chron. 6. 36; Prov. 20. 9; Eccles. 7. 20; 1 John 1. 8.—*d* Psalm 34. 13; chapter 1. 26; 1 Peter 3. 10.—*e* Matthew 12. 37.—*f* Psalm 32. 9.

CHAPTER III.

7. Christian synagogue, also, rejects many teachers with untamable and self-contradictory tongues, 1-12.

1. **My brethren** — Our apostle's standpoint is still in the Christian *synagogue*, where he is checking the errors and faults of his **brethren.** In the last chapter he reproved their obsequiousness to **rich** incomers, and refutes their excuses; he here checks their ambitious loquacity, aiming to be *teachers* before they had become competent learners. In i, 19–26 he had criticised rather the garrulity of hearers and answerers; he here reprehends the assumptions of the speakers. **Masters**—Rather, *teachers.* This did not forbid the expression of Christian experience and interchange of exhortation and counsel by the **many.** Nor did it forbid catechists and imparters of the elements of established Christian knowledge to be **many.** Nor does it forbid Sabbath-school instructors at the present day, who are happily very **many;** but it reprehends self-conceited and self-appointed doctrinaries, ready to blurt their individual notions and maintain them in the assemblies. The result would be crude theologies, heated disputations, and erratic sects and heresies. Alford and Huther condemn Grotius for interpreting **many** teachers as equivalent to *all teachers.* But as the whole Church is addressed in the caution it can hardly mean less. The picture it suggests is, that (as in 1 Cor. xiv, 26–33) every member of the Church was free to use his tongue in the assembly, and used his freedom fully. The institute of the single pastorate for the single Church was, perhaps, as yet not fully established, though its need was fully felt, and its existence coming in. **Condemnation** —Namely, for the **offend** of next verse, to which we are **all** liable. **Greater condemnation** will fall on him who assumes the higher responsibilities and exhibits his assumption most loudly.

2. **For**—In explanation of the **greater condemnation. We offend**—Literally, we *stumble.* The Greek word is cognate with the Greek word *to fall,* and they are finely distinguished by St. Paul, Romans xi, 11, where he says that Israel has not **stumbled that they should fall.** (A Greek proverb, "not to stumble twice at the same stone.") **All**—The mere English reader is very apt to understand our translation to mean, *we offend every body;* making **all** the object. The true meaning is, that **in many things we all** stumble; that is, make intellectual and moral mistakes and blunders; which is true enough of the wisest and holiest of us. And, therefore, our apostle cautions us to avoid setting up for too much. **Offend not**—Stumble not. **In word**—In performance of his assumption to be a teacher in the *synagogue.* **Perfect man**—He has become in mind and spirit what he doubtless has in body—a completely grown, filled out, and proportioned **man. Able also**—For, so far as he is **able** to *speak* perfectly right, it is probable that he can do perfectly right. The wisdom and moral power with which he can govern his tongue is very likely to govern his **whole body.** The **body,** as the whole organ of the soul, with its susceptibilities to temptation, and its limbs as the instruments of right or wrong, as the *I,* the will, directs.

3. **Behold**—Of all these instruments of good or evil St. James considers **the tongue** as the most efficient and often over-efficient. He sets this in the strongest light by putting, by striking

obey us; and we turn about their whole body. **4** Behold also the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. **5** Even so [e]the tongue is a little member, and [h]boasteth great things. Behold, how great [2]a matter a little fire kindleth! **6** And [i]the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that [k]it defileth the whole body,

g Prov. 12. 18; 15. 2.—*h* Psa. 12. 3; 73. 8, 9.
2 Or, *wood*.

i Prov. 16. 27.—*k* Matt. 15. 11, 18-20; Mark 7. 15, 20, 23.

images, the vivid contrast between its small magnitude and its great power. Two of these images (verses 3 and 4) are now presented to the talkative synagogue. By the **bridleth** of the last verse is expressed the control of the will over the tongue; but here the **bits** represent the tongue itself, wherewith **we** control every thing else. **Whole body**—As a horseman with **bits** turns the **whole** horse, so a speaker with a persuasive tongue will turn a whole man, nay, a whole body of men. The tongue of the eloquent orator turns whole assemblies, and controls the destinies of States. And so the tongue of the wily errorist may turn a whole Church, may introduce a strange doctrine, or establish a new sect. And so the unrestrained tongues of a *synagogue* may raise a great buzz, and produce disorder and every evil work. Hence the importance of Church unity under the control of apostolic teaching.

4. **Helm**—Rudder. **The ships** are a larger image of the same truth, and, taking in their size and the force of **winds**, form a fine illustration.

5. **Little...great**—More accurate and vivid rendering, according to Tischendorf's pointing: *Behold how little a fire,* **the tongue,** *kindleth a forest how great! As a fire, a world of iniquity, is the tongue placed among our members; bespotting the whole body, and inflaming the wheel of nature.* The especial point is, that the smallness of the tongue should not blind us to the importance of controlling it by the conscience, but in fact arouse us to the thought of the greatness of its effects and the importance of its control. **A little fire** may result in the conflagration of how wide a prairie, or how great a city!

6. The apostle catches at the thought of **a fire,** and expands it. Doubtless, many a *synagogue* had been set into wild conflagration by this **fire...the tongue.** Perhaps as **fire** here corresponds to **setteth on fire,** so **world of iniquity** may correspond to **defileth the whole body.** While **world,** then, is an image of filth and corruption, **fire** indicates inflammation and destruction. **Is**—Rather, **is** *constituted* or *placed* among the members. **Course of nature**—Absurdly rendered by Alford "orb of creation!" with which the tongue has little to do. The words literally mean, *the wheel of generation.* But what does that mean? The expression is no way illustrated, as some commentators suppose, by the image of a *wheel* set on fire by its *own* rapidity, for here the setting on fire is done, not by the wheel itself, but by **the tongue.** Nor can there be any allusion to "the world in its various revolutions," (as Wordsworth,) or to the cycle of animal creation, (as Alford,) for over neither of them has the human tongue any notable influence. The phrase is clearly a physiological one, suggested by the word **body,** referring to the evolutions that revolve within our bodily system. The tongue defiles our **body,** and inflames all the natural functions evolved within it. The circulation of the blood was, indeed, unknown to our apostle, but that *round* of alimentary, sexual, and passional appetites and gratifications of which the blood-circle is the base, and through which our system whirls, is known to all philosophy. How the roll of this *wheel,* especially in its sexual department, may be affected by the tongue we all know. The phrase, **of nature,** is the same as is translated **natural** in i, 23, where see note. The **face** there was the face derived from our generative origin: the

and setteth on fire the [3]course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. **7** For every [4]kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of [5]mankind: **8** But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* [l]an unruly evil, [m]full of deadly poison. **9** Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, [n]which are made after the similitude of God. **10** Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. **11** Doth a fountain

3 Greek, *wheel.* — 4 Greek, *nature.*
5 Greek, *nature of man.*

l Deut. 32. 33; Psa. 55. 21.—*m* Psa. 140. 3; Eccl. 10. 11.—*n* Gen. 1. 26; 5. 1; 9. 6.

wheel here is the internal system derived to us by generation, whose involution carries around the complex circle of our passional life. Our translators' words, then, hit about the true idea. The tongue does set **on fire the course of** our inward passional **nature,** inflaming the whirl of sensuality, gluttony, drunkenness, rage, and fight. Huther's and Alford's objection, that the writer would not mention, literally, **the whole body,** and then 'again express it in a figure," is invalid. To mention first **the whole** external **body** literally, and then express in figure the interior blended functions, nervous and mental, is perfectly natural. The exterior **body** is named with literality because it is plainly visible; the interior functions, being conceptual, are best expressed in conceptual phrase. The mention of the **body** locates the described functions. **Set on fire of hell**—First, our inward **nature** is **set on fire** by **the tongue** as by a torch, and the torch is **set on fire** by gehenna. The tongue catches from **hell** the fire with which it inflames our blood, and circulates the burning sensation through our system.

7. **Every kind**—Literally, **every** *nature;* where, as Huther well remarks, not the taming of individuals is meant, but of the brutal *natures.* The natures of the four great orders here enumerated have been brought under control by the nature and genius of man.

8. **Tongue can no man tame**—Augustine says, that never, but by the grace of God, has any tongue been tamed. It may be replied that worldly self-interest often tames the tongue as effectually as divine wisdom. As to that, however, it may be asked, *To what does worldly prudence tame the tongue?* And it may be answered, It tames the tongue to a subdued but still wild and depraved state. Nothing but the grace of God tames the tongue to that docility to which our apostle alludes, *submission to the divine law,* and the hearty utterance of a holy confession.

9. This wildness of **the tongue** is now (9–12) shown by the contrariety of its moral uses. **We**—In verses 9 and 10 our apostle passes beyond the limits of the Christian *synagogue* into the length and breadth of the **twelve tribes.** And his **we** includes himself, by courtesy, even among the profane users of **the tongue. Bless we God**—Applicable to all Jews, and indicating that his address does go little beyond the monotheistic **twelve tribes.** A preferred reading is *Lord* for **God. Even the Father**—Creator of man in his own image. The **twelve tribes** did not fully recognise the Son. **Curse...men**—Especially at these times did the tribes **curse** their Roman conquerors and despots. **Similitude of God**—And so to curse as well as to murder (Gen. i, 26, ix, 6) is aggravated by that **similitude.**

10. **Same mouth**—Thus far these contrasts have illustrated the versatile power of **the tongue.** They will now serve to enforce the wickedness of such inconsistency. **My brethren... ought not**—And cannot, just so far as they are true **brethren,** that is, true Christians, or true people of the Messiah.

11. The moral impossibility of such opposite manifestations of character is illustrated by the products of nature. It is, in moral character, the opposition between incompatible qualities. If a man display one set of qualities he cannot possess the other, so as to be a

send forth at the same [6] place sweet *water* and bitter? **12** Can [o] the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

13 [p] Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation [q] his works [r] with meekness of wisdom. **14** But if ye have [s] bitter envying and strife in your hearts, [t] glory not, and lie not against the truth. **15** [u] This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, [7] sensual, devilish. **16** For [v] where envying and strife *is*, there *is* [8] confusion and every evil work. **17** But [w] the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good

6 Or, *hole.*—*o* Isa. 5. 2, 4; Jer. 2. 21; Matt. 7. 16, 20.—*p* Gal. 6. 4.—*q* Chap. 2. 18.—*r* Chap. 1. 21.—*s* Rom. 13. 13.—*t* Rom. 2. 17, 23.

u Phil. 3. 19; chap. 1. 17.—7 Or, *natural;* Jude 19.—*v* 1 Cor. 3. 3; Gal. 5. 20.—8 Greek, *tumult*, or *unquietness.*—*w* 1 Cor. 2. 6.

wicked man and a holy man, an heir of heaven and a child of hell at the same time. **Place**—Fissure from which the water jets forth.

8. True test of teachers and hearers—a heaven-descended wisdom, evinced by rectitude and peacefulness of temper and life, 13-18.

13. **Who**—Of these contrasts be sure to exhibit the right one. **Wise man**—Truly on the side of divine **wisdom**; the **wisdom** of i, 5. **Let him show**—Like a good fountain let him pour forth the **sweet** and not the **bitter** stream; like a good tree, the right fruit What the good fruits are he now tells. **Conversation**—Conduct, mode of life. **Works**—Special good doings. **Meekness**—The opposite of the tongueiness of the many teachers. **Wisdom**—The **wisdom** of the just. If there be **among you** a professed Christian let him come out of an equivocal state, half holy and half wicked, and let him, both by general life and special act, show the Christian tempers.

14. The contrasted traits. **Glory not**—Make no proud profession, nor fancy that these are exalting qualities. **Lie not against the truth**—By depreciating its excellence in order to exalt your worldly vices. The worldly, emulous spirit fancies itself to be infinitely superior to the **meekness and wisdom** of the Gospel, having a lordlier **wisdom** of its own, and **this wisdom** James characterizes in the next verse.

15. **This wisdom**—Two counter pictures of the opposite **wisdoms** in 15–18. There is a proud **wisdom** that boasts of its worldly value, and knows how to fight its way and beat all before it. Whence came it? **Not from above**—It is not the **wisdom** revealed from God by the holy Jesus. And what is it? Its threefold character is sketched in three terrible words. Man in ascending grades is body, soul, and spirit. See note on 1 Cor. xv, 44. In ascending scale man is corporeal, soulical, spiritual; and by the spiritual, angel-like. In descending scale he is **earthly** = corporeal; **sensual** = soulical, animal; spiritual = demoniac, **devilish.** This **wisdom** belongs to the descending scale; descending to the infernal by an awful anticlimax of wickedness and woe. Plenty of this **wisdom** rules among the rulers of this world. Thence come partisan politics, unprincipled diplomacies, and the **wars and fightings** of iv, 1.

16. The characteristics of this worldly **wisdom** are **envying**, rather, *emulation*, and **strife**, or *rivalry*. It is the **wisdom** of making yourself great in disregard of the rights and well-being of all or any others. **Evil work**—Deeds of cruelty and oppression.

17. Contrasted picture of the **wisdom that is from above. First pure**—The **pure** is **first** as being foremost, and comprehending all the following points, and being inner essence of the whole. It stands in antithesis against the terrible trial of verse 15. To be **pure** is to be untainted by the tempers expressed in verse 16. **Then**

fruits, [9] without partiality, [x] and without hypocrisy. **18** [y] And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

9 Or, *without wrangling.*—*x* Rom. 12. 9; 1 Peter 1. 22; 2. 1; 1 John 3. 18.—*y* Prov. 11. 18;

—After the inner **pure** follow all the external qualities of character and action. **Peaceable**—In antithesis against **envying** and **strife,** verse 16. **Gentle**—The reverse of roughness, violence, of word or manner, which exhibit themselves in sweeping assertions and hyperboles. **Easy to be entreated**—Or, rather, *persuaded;* the reverse of obstinacy, the pride of a false consistency, or a set persistence in one's own way. **Full of mercy**—Pity for the unfortunate, and judicious compassion for the guilty. **Good fruits**—The reverse of **evil work,** verse 16. **Without partiality, and without hypocrisy**—These two clauses are two Greek words in the original which have similar terminations, and so make a word-echo. We might nearly parallel them by the words, *neither hypercritical, nor hypocritical.* The first of the two Greek words may signify, making no undue distinctions, (hence *fair, impartial,*) as, for instance, between rich and poor. Or, it may mean unequivocal, unambiguous, clear from equivocation or just liability to being doubted. The latter of the two words is, accordingly, rendered rightly in the English translation. We might (with these last definitions of the two) preserve the terminal similarity of sound by, *without equivocation or dissimulation.*

In regard to the two contrasted *wisdoms* of 13–17 we may note: First, it is in accordance with the Old Testament use of the word **wisdom,** which makes it belong to the moral rather than to the intellectual sphere. It refers not so much to the degree of sagacity or scientific education as to the right state of the heart. Second, St. James does not intend to define **wisdom** in its broadest moral sense, but only as in reference to the vices he has just been reprehending; namely, a use of the tongue as an instrument of emu-

CHAPTER IV.

FROM whence *come* wars and [1] fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your [2] lusts

Hos. 10. 12; Matt. 5. 9; Phil. 1. 11; Heb. 12. 11 —1 Or, *brawlings.*—2 Or, *pleasures.*

lations and strifes. His wisdom, then, is *peace,* obtained by gentleness, fairness, sincerity, and silence.

18. **Fruit...is sown**—By **fruit** is meant the harvest, crop, or product; and this is virtually **sown** in the seed that produces it. **Fruit,** consisting in **righteousness,** not **fruit** produced by **righteousness.** And this **fruit,** namely, **righteousness,** springs from a seed-sowing **in** the soil of **peace** by **them that make** or enact **peace.** The man of holy **peace** sows that seed **in peace** which brings forth **righteousness.** Thus in holy eloquence does St. James appeal to his fellows of the **twelve tribes,** both Christians and those who should be Christians, among whom strifes of tongue arising from bitterness of heart were producing sin and ruin, to seek for righteousness in the paths of holy quietude and peace. In an angry age his warnings were slighted, and the ruin resulted in the destruction of their capital and the overthrow of their State.

CHAPTER IV.

III. Outside the Christian Synagogue — Public Turbulence and Wars, Irreverence, and Oppressive Wealth, iv, 1–v, 11.

1. Wars and public commotions—Whence come they? What the remedy? 1-10.

1. **Whence...wars**—Passing beyond the *synagogue,* Christian or Jewish, our apostle extends his address to the people of the **twelve tribes.** The great body of modern commentators, such as Stier, Bengel, De Wette, Huther, and Alford have interpreted these **wars** as strifes in Churches, or even between Christian teachers! This has arisen from their not discriminating the various classes addressed by the epistle. Limiting all the epistle to the Christian body, they are obliged either to impute to the apostolic Church enor-

that war in your members? 2 Ye lust, and have not: ye [3]kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not,

a Rom. 7. 23; Gal. 5. 17; 1 Pet. 2. 11.

[3] Or, *envy.*

mities of which it was not supposably guilty, or else very arbitrarily to give a figurative meaning to the terms. The class plainly enough addressed is the Jews who, in those troublous times, acted the part of brigands—robbed, murdered, skirmished in armed bands, and yet held themselves as the people of God, doing him service. The passage is a picture of the times described in our vol. iii, pp. 233–235.

Huther thus approvingly quotes Laurentius as saying: "The apostle speaks, not concerning wars and slaughters;" which are precisely what he does speak about; "but concerning mutual dissensions, lawsuits, scoldings, and contentions." From such an exegesis we are obliged to dissent, and fall back, with Grotius, and recognise a clear view of the Jewish age.

First, it seems entirely inadmissible to interpret such a series of terms as wars, battles, kill, fight, cleanse hands, sinners, doubleminded, of the Christian body. These phrases, also, stand in strong contrast with the terms of vers. 11, 12, where **brethren** are directly addressed, and where the faults corrected are not blood and murder, but *censorious speaking.*

Second, even these interpreters admit that the dread apostrophe to the oppressive **rich** in first paragraph of next chapter is not addressed to Christians. But the two passages are precisely parallel. One addresses the disturbers of public peace, the other the oppressors of the poor, especially poor Christians. It would be just as easy, by a forced transformation of the strong terms into figures, to make the latter passage an address to the Church as the former.

Third, the two passages are also parallel in the fact that each is followed by a passage in a very different tone addressed to the Church. As the denunciations iv, 1–10 are parallel to the denunciations of v, 6, so is the gentle address to the Church in iv, 11, 12, parallel to the gentle address to the Church in v, 7–10, and following. In both cases there is a bold appeal to the wicked world, followed by a fraternal appeal to the holy, yet not faultless, Church.

Fightings—*Battles*, specific acts of *war.* The preferred reading repeats the **whence** for vividness; **whence come wars?** *whence battles?* **Lusts**—Not the usual Greek word for **lusts,** but the word for *pleasures*, or *delights.* The term alludes to that bad *delight* or gratification, existing in the fierceness of strife, prompting to repetition. **That war**—There is an inward war, prompting to outward. The bloody public contests were deeply based upon the inward depravities, the cupidities, ambitions, revenges, lusts, mingled with the fiery patriotisms and religions kindled to fanaticism. Thence came assassinations, rapines, conflagrations, finally resulting in the dissolution of society, and the desolation of the land swept of its inhabitants.

2. **Ye lust**—Ye desire, crave. The objects of most of the verbs in the passage are to be supplied, the apostle leaving our minds to conceive how varied they are. **Have not**—In spite of your craving and violent efforts to obtain. They desired wealth, but poverty was the order of the day. They desired domination, but were enslaved by the Romans. They desired emancipation, but every bloody effort led to a bloodier destruction. **Kill**—In predatory assaults and political insurrections. **Desire to have**—It is a great puzzle with even such commentators as Huther and Alford to tell why St. James should commit such an anticlimax as to place so feeble a term as **desire** after **kill.** Alford discusses four solutions of previous commentators, rejecting them all, and gives a fifth little better than the four. The true solution is very simple. The three verbs, **kill, desire, cannot obtain,** are to be taken in close connexion: **Ye kill** and **desire to have,** (namely, the avails of your killing,) and **cannot ob-**

because ye ask not. **3** [b]Ye ask, and receive not, [c]because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your [4]lusts. **4** [d]Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that [e]the friendship of the world is enmity with God? [f]whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. **5** Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, [g]The

[b] Job 27. 9; 35. 12; Psa. 18. 41; Prov. 1. 28; Isa. 1. 15; Jer. 11. 11; Micah 3. 4; Zech. 7. 13.—[c] Psalm 66. 18; 1 John 3. 22; 5. 14.—[4] Or, *pleasures.*—[d] Psa. 73. 27.—[e] 1 John 2. 15.—[f] John 15. 19; 17. 14; Gal. 1. 10.—[g] Gen. 6. 5; 8. 21; Num. 11. 29; Prov. 21. 10.

tain, (those avails;) so that your bloodshed is bootless. You obtain neither wealth, nor emancipation, nor domination. **Ask not**—They were monotheists, hereditary covenant people of God, went through rituals, and yet their prayer was no prayer. For, as the next verse shows, they were lustful ejaculations.

3. **Ask amiss**—A sort of correction of his phrase **ask not** in last verse. The **amiss** consists in the sensual nature of their prayers. The asking for the gratification of our unholy natures is a prayer which is not a prayer. **Consume**—Or expend it, not **upon,** but *in,* **your lusts.** *In* **your lusts** expresses the moral condition in which they offered their prayerless prayers. A Greek brigand at the present day can unite robbery and murder with the most devout adoration of the virgin.

Thus far in this chapter (1–3) our apostle has pictured *the depraved and disturbed state of the world,* especially in his own age. Next (4–10) he draws *the antithesis between God and the world,* between which his readers must make their choice, as the two are incompatible.

4. **Adulterers** is probably a spurious reading prefixed to **adulteresses,** which is alone genuine. We also prefer Tischendorf's punctuation, which would read, "that you may expend it in your lusts, ye adulteresses." Israel is often termed in the Old Testament the spouse of Jehovah, and apostate Israel is pronounced an *adulteress.* Said Isaiah, (liv, 5,) "Thy Maker is thine husband:" and Jeremiah, (ii, 2,) "I remember... the love of thine espousals." Said Ezekiel, (xvi, 32.) "But as a wife that committeth adultery." Our Lord pronounced the Jews an "adulterous generation." (Matt. xii, 29; xvi, 4; Mark viii, 38.) In all probability the copyist, not perceiving this figurative sense, thought that adulterers should be added in order to include both sexes in the charge of literal adultery. **Know ye not**—Parallel with *think ye,* **do ye think,** in next verse, with an *or* between the two. These two parallel questions start, first, the antithesis between the friendship of the world and the friendship of God; and, second, the contrast made by God against **envy** and **the proud** in favour of **the humble.** This drift of the thought is important as *key* to the difficulty found by commentators in the interpretation of verse 5. **Friendship** (rather, *love*) **of the world**—What is meant by **world** when it is thus condemned in lump? Not merely the secular business of **the world,** or human society, or the State, or the organic system of human things as such. The existence of such things is right. To say otherwise is to introduce a most disastrous and demoralizing monasticism. And this organic structure of human things is largely at the present age fused over with Christian influences. **The** living **world** of our present Christendom is not as bad as **the world** of the apostolic age. **Enmity with God**—For he who loves **the world** as ruled by Satan is at war with God and his kingdom.

5. This second question suggests that (in accordance with all Scripture) the proud human **spirit** burns with **envy,** while God in his **grace** is on the side of **the humble. Saith**—Quotation of no particular passage, but a sentiment every-where assumed or expressed by **Scripture. The spirit that dwelleth in us**—The unholy temper. But a reading preferred by good scholars is, The spirit that he (God) *hath caused to dwell in us.* Alford adopts this reading, and by it

spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth [5] to envy? **6** But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, [h] God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. **7** Submit yourselves

5 Or, *enviously*.—*h* Job 22. 29; Psa. 138. 6; Prov. 3. 34; Matt. 23. 12; Luke 1. 52; 18. 14; 1 Pet.

makes the **spirit** to be the divine **spirit** bestowed upon the Church. But from that he gets what we think a very perplexed meaning of the verse: "The spirit that he (God) has placed within us jealously desireth us (for its own.") But he fails to find any Scripture which uses the Greek word for **envy** to designate the divine *jealousy* of God for his Church. And the supplying as object for the word **lusteth** (or, more properly, *desireth*) "us for his own" is arbitrary. By this new, and doubtless correct, reading, we understand our own **spirit,** not as a *temper*, but as the highest part of our nature, as *body, soul*, and **spirit.** Note, iii, 15. It is the high human **spirit** which **lusteth,** intensely *desires*, **to** (in the direction towards) **envy;** an **envy** of which pride is the element, desirous of attaining a superiority over all envied rivalry. It is an aggravation that this **envy** is the sin of **the spirit** which God has made to dwell *within* **us,** in order that we might be truly angel like.

6. **More grace**—Literally, *But a greater* **grace he** *bestows;* namely, as the next sentence shows, the **grace** of God to **the humble.** *Greater* than what is this **grace?** It is given *greater* to **the humble** (next verse) than it otherwise would be given in view of the antithesis of **the humble** against **the proud,** that is, the high **spirit** of **envy.** The question then amounts to this: *Say not rightly the Scriptures that man's proud yet God-bestowed spirit tends to envy, and to overcome the superiority of rivals? But a greater* **grace,** *therefore, does He give, namely, to* **the humble,** *and he resists the overriding attempts of* **the proud. He saith**—Quoted freely from Psalm cxxxviii, 6, or Prov. iii, 34. **The proud**—Whose **spirit lusteth to envy.**

7. The same antithesis as that mentioned in verse 4 is carried through the paragraph. It is between the **proud** and the **humble,** between **God,** to be submitted and approached, and **the devil,** to be resisted; between **cleanse** and **sinners,** between **purify** and **doubleminded,** between **laughter** and **mourning,** and, finally, between penitent **humiliation** and a divine **exaltation. Therefore**—In view of the fact that the proud **spirit** is resisted by Jehovah. But while there is One to whom we must **submit,** there is one whom we should **resist—the devil. Will flee**—Temptations repelled disappear, and when habitually kept at a distance, cease to exist. The firmly formed habit of virtue comparatively places the soul out of the normal reach of temptation. The apostolic father, Hermas, said, "The devil is able to wrestle, but not to wrestle us down: for if we struggle firmly he is conquered, and slinks away in shame."

8. **Draw nigh**—The reverse of **resist.** The former should be done **to God,** the latter to **the devil**—the two sides of the great battle for possession of the human soul. The drawing nigh to God was ritually symbolized by the approach of the people, and especially the priests, to Jehovah in the holy of holies. But under the new dispensation, the holy of holies is wherever God's omnipresence is, and the penitent heart is its own priest, able to offer an acceptable incense. **Cleanse . . . hands . . . sinners**—The *sinner* is the actual transgressor; his **hands** are stained with blood or other blot of sin; he must **cleanse** by reformation that he may spread clean **hands** in prayer to God. In vain does the wild guerilla imagine that his sanguinary deeds are done in the divine behalf and winning the divine favour. **Hearts**—Imply a deeper change, that

5. 5.—*i* Eph. 4. 27; 1 Pet. 5. 9.—*k* 2 Chron. 15. 2.—*l* Isa. 1. 16.—*m* 1 Pet. 1. 22; 1 John 3. 3.

your hearts, *ye* [n]doubleminded. **9** [o]Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. **10** [p]Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

11 [q]Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, [r]and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

n Chap. 1. 8. —*o* Matt. 5. 4. —*p* Job 22. 29; Matt. 23. 12; Luke 14. 11; 18. 14; 1 Pet. 5 6. —*q* Eph. 4. 31; 1 Pet. 2. 1. —*r* Matt. 7. 1; Luke 6. 37; Rom. 2. 1; 1 Cor. 4. 5. —*s* Matt. 10. 28. —*t* Rom. 14. 4, 13.

the **doubleminded,** no longer serving **the world,** may have a single heart for God.

9. **Be afflicted**—Penitence is the way to repentance and reformation; penitence in view of past sin and future judgment. The ring of revelry and **laughter** should give way to the voice of **mourning.**

10. **Humble yourselves . . . lift you up**—To pardon, holiness, and heaven.

2. Christian avoidance of even bitter and hostile speech, 11, 12.

11. **Brethren**—It did not need this tender word to show us that a different class is now addressed from the **sinners** of the last terrible paragraph. If they were the same, we do not well see how the **brethren** could **speak evil** of each other any more keenly than he speaks of them. **Of his brother**—One who, it may be assumed, tries to be, and believes he is, right. **Judgeth his brother**—Arraigns him and pronounces sentence upon him, like an authoritative superior. **Judge the law**—Decides upon the exact nature and force of the law, and its absolute bearing on the particular case of the brother. We may have our opinion, and the **brother** may have his; what is condemned is our overriding his judgment, as if he were a culprit who had no right to an opinion. **Not a doer . . . but a judge**—You leave your proper position on

12 There is one lawgiver, [s]who is able to save and to destroy: [t]who art thou that judgest another?

13 [u]Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: **14** Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? [6][v]It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. **15** For that ye *ought* to say, [w]If the Lord will, we shall live, and

u Prov. 27. 1; Isa. 56. 12; Luke 12. 18, &c. —6 Or, *For it is.* —*v* Job 7. 7; Psa. 102. 3; chap. 1. 10; 1 Pet. 1. 24; 1 John 2. 17. —*w* Acts 18. 21; 1 Cor. 4. 19; 16. 7; Heb. 6. 3.

the common level with your **brother,** of obedience to **the law,** and mount a tribunal in which you pronounce upon both the **law** and the **brother.** This does not forbid just criticism, but does forbid a reckless overbearing towards one whom we have reason to believe conscientious, in which our own pride of decision is involved.

12. **Who art thou**—A usurper of the right of the supreme **One.**

3. And of arrogant conversational ignoring of God, 13-17.

13. **Go to now**—An interjection to excite attention. The modern phrase would be, *Come now.* The old phrase is, perhaps, the more accurate, as it aims to incite to right procedure. The number of precise particulars, **to-morrow, such a city, a year, buy, sell, get gain,** presumes upon many contingent points in which there is probability of failure, especially the closing one, which is the real aim of all the rest. **It is**—A preferred reading is, **ye are.** It is not our **life,** but even *ourselves,* that is an appearing and then vanishing **vapour** or mist.

15. **To say**—In word or in heart. The precise and perfunctory utterance of the formula is of far less value than the deep consciousness of our own evanescent nature, and our deep dependence on God, consummated in a complete committal, ever renewed daily and hourly, of ourselves into his hand.

do this, or that. **16** But now ye rejoice in your boastings: [x] all such rejoicing is evil. **17** Therefore [y] to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.

[x] 1 Cor. 5. 6.—[y] Luke 12. 47; John 9. 41; 15 22; Rom. 1. 20, 21, 32; 2. 17, 18, 23.

16. **Now**—As your present habit is. **Rejoice**—Rather, *glory*—are proud of. **Your boastings**—Your presumptuous proclaiming what you will do, to be cut off, perhaps, by failure and by death.

17. **Therefore**—As a summing up. **To do good**—Rather, **to do** *well*, in opposition to the **evil** of the last verse. The *doing well* is the ceasing from such **boasting,** and the trusting ourselves to the divine hand. It is not the purpose of the text to condemn sins of omission.

CHAPTER V.

4. Denunciatory appeal to the rich for their oppression, self-indulgence, and persecution, 1-6.

1. **Go to now**—Note on iv, 13. **Rich men**—The **rich men** of St. James were something different from the honest and charitable possessors of wealth of which our Christianity has since furnished so many specimens. They displayed great outward pomp, ii, 2, 3; they were political *dynasts*, (καταδυναστεύουσιν,) or potentates, ii, 6; they were blasphemers and persecutors, ii, 7; they used their power to defraud the labourers upon their broad acres, v, 4; they held judicial positions, and used them to put the just man to death, v, 6. They are, therefore, the Jewish ruling tyrant-class of the day, called **rich men,** because their gorgeous display of pomp and opulence is their prominent aspect to the Christian eye. Of the **rich men** of St. James's day in the Roman empire generally, see note on verse 6. But the strangest thing in interpreting the words of St. James is, the fact that leading commentators imagine these **rich men** to be Christians! **Howl** and **shall come** are both participles in the present tense. A literal rendering of the whole verse would be, *Ho, now,*

CHAPTER V.

GO [a] to now, *ye* rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon *you.* **2** Your riches are corrupted, and [b] your

[a] Prov. 11. 28; Luke 6. 24; 1 Tim. 6. 9.—[b] Job 13. 28; Matt. 6. 20; chap. 2. 2.

ye rich men, weep! howling upon the miseries coming on. The *howling* aggravates the **weep,** likening them to a pack of eastern dogs.

2. **Riches are corrupted**—Under a series of physical images the great truth is proclaimed that ill-gotten and oppressive wealth brings upon the possessor the divine malediction, fulfilled in this or a coming world. The various forms of wealth are either to be themselves destroyed, or to become the destroyers of their holders. As it is **rich men** of the **twelve tribes** who are here more specifically addressed —as the epistle was written from Jerusalem, and as the magnates of the **tribes** were even now on the brink of destruction in the coming overthrow of the Jewish State, it is a plausible interpretation which applies this passage as a prophecy, in accordance with our Lord's memorable predictions of that downfall.

Nor is it supposable that a man so deeply imbued with so national and patriotic a sympathy for his kindred would overlook that coming catastrophe so fully predicted by Jesus, and so well understood by Jewish Christians as that they thereby effected their own escape. Indeed, this predicting the **day of slaughter,** and then the *parousia* of verse 7, is remarkably parallel to our Lord's discourse distinguishing and contrasting these two great events. The specifications of their treasures with their destruction embraces a triad, namely, **riches,** or hoarded goods; **garments**; and **gold and silver.** The first *has been* (for the three verbs are in the perfect tense, and should have been strictly so rendered) *rotted;* the second, **motheaten**; the third, not only **rusted,** but so **rusted** as that **the rust** shall corrode like **fire,** and consume their **flesh.** Like the old prophets, our apostle takes his

garments are motheaten. **3** Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. [c] Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. **4** Behold, [d] the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and [e] the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. **5** [f] Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. **6** [g] Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he doth not resist you.

[c] Rom. 2. 5. —[d] Lev. 19. 13; Job 24. 10, 11; Jer. 22. 13; Mal. 3. 5. —[e] Deut. 24. 15.

[f] Job 21. 13; Amos 6. 1, 4; Luke 16. 19, 25, 1 Tim. 5. 6. —[g] Chap. 2. 6.

standpoint in the future, and contemplates the destruction he predicts as already completed. **Corrupted**—Literally, *putrified, rotted.*

3. **Gold . . . cankered**—Literally, *rusted.* Gold, however, never does truly **rust**, or oxidize, just as **fire** does not **eat**, or rust eat **flesh.** Such a fact is, of course, here only *figured*, as an image of the perishability of human fortunes. Bloomfield says, "Gold does not, properly, *rust;* yet by long use it contracts a green colour, and a sort of acid humour. The ancient gold and silver might be more liable to *rust*, from having a greater proportion of alloy." That greening of gold coin was viewed as a sort of *rust*, as appears from the poet Theocritus, (Idyl 16,) where he says that no one would give poets money; nay, "not rub off the rust of their money and give it to them." **Witness against you**—Not **against**, but *to*, **you.** It does not testify to any crime, but prophesies that **you** shall be even **cankered** as it is. **For the last days**—Literally, *in* **last days.** It is to be noted that the heaping of the **treasure** was within, not previous to, the **last days.** Both **last days** and **day of slaughter** are without the Greek article, while **coming**, of verse 7, (where see note,) has the article. Both these terms, **last days** and **day,** clearly signify the closing days of the apostolic age of the Church, coincident with the closing days of the Jewish State. See notes on 2 Thess. ii, 7; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Pet. iii, 3; 1 John ii, 18–22, and iv, 3; 2 John 7.

4. **Hire of the labourers**—The **rich men** were great landholders, who had, perhaps, thousands of tenants or serfs, kept to a barely living recompense. Their rightful wages were withheld, and misery and starvation were the result to the helpless toiler. **Crieth**—Like the blood of Abel against his murderer, (Gen. iv, 10;) like the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, (Gen. xviii, 20;) like the groaning of Israel against the oppression of Pharaoh, Exod. ii, 23, 24. **Lord of Sabaoth**—Especially are these predictions fulfilled in a nation like our own, which boasted of its Christianity and its freedom, while holding a stolen race in oppression. We have lately found the national crime an antecedent to a national **day of slaughter.**

5. **On the earth**—Spoken, as above said, as if from the judgment throne. **Wanton**—Lascivious, as a result of wealth and luxury. **Nourished**—Fattened like swine. **In a day of slaughter**—The crime lasted so as to be, as it were, **in** the very time of the penalty. The penalty was so sudden as to be **in** the **day** of the crime. **The** (rather, *a*) **day of slaughter** ever interrupts the *days* of oppression, luxury, and lust. So it was in the Jewish state, the Roman empire, the French revolution, and, finally, our own days of slaveholding.

6. **The just**—True pre-eminently of their condemning and killing the just One, Jesus; and afterwards Stephen, and, finally, St. James himself. **Doth not**—The continuous present, implying that the martyr is ever non-resistant.

The character of the **rich men** of St. James's age may be understood by the following description from a chapter on "The Decline of the Roman Empire," by the historian Bancroft in his "Miscellanies:"

"The *aristocracy* owned the soil and its cultivators. The vast capacity for accumulation which the laws of society secure to capital in a greater degree than to personal exertion, displays itself nowhere so clearly as in slave-holding States, where the labouring class is but a portion of the capital of the opulent. As wealth consists chiefly in land and slaves, the rates of interest are, from universally operative causes always comparatively high, making the difficulty of advancing with borrowed capital proportionably great. The small landholder finds himself unable to compete with those who are possessed of whole cohorts of bondmen; his slaves, his lands, rapidly pass, in consequence of his debts, into the hands of the more opulent. The large plantations are constantly swallowing up the smaller ones; and land and slaves come to be engrossed by the few. Before Cæsar passed the Rubicon this condition existed in the extreme in the Roman State. The rural indigent crept into the walls of Rome. A free labourer was hardly known. The large proprietors of slaves not only tilled their immense plantations, but also indulged their avarice in training their slaves to every species of labour, and letting them out, as horses from a livery stable, for the performance of every conceivable species of work. Four or five hundred men were not an uncommon number in one family; fifteen or twenty thousand sometimes belonged to one master. The immense wealth of Crassus consisted chiefly in lands and slaves: on the number of his slaves we hardly dare hazard a conjecture. Of joiners and masons he had over five hundred. Nor was this the whole evil. The nobles, having impoverished their lands, became usurers, and had their agents dispersed over all the provinces. The censor, Cato, closed his career by recommending usury as more productive than agriculture; and such was the prodigality of the Roman planters, that, to indulge their fondness for luxury, many of them mortgaged their estates to the money lenders. Thus the lands of Italy, at best in the hands of a few proprietors, became virtually vested in a still smaller number of usurers. No man's house, no man's person, was secure.

"The captives in war were sold at auction. Cicero, during the little campaign in which he was commander, sold men enough to produce, at half price, about half a million of dollars.

"The second mode of supplying the slave market was by commerce; and this supply was so uniform and abundant that the price of an ordinary labourer hardly varied for centuries. The reason is obvious; where the slave merchant gets his cargoes from kidnappers the first cost is inconsiderable. The great centres of this traffic were in the countries bordering on the Euxine; and Scythians were often stolen. Caravans penetrated the deserts of Africa, and made regular hunts for slaves. Blacks were highly valued; they were rare, and, therefore, both male and female negroes were favourite articles of luxury among the opulent Romans. At one period Delos was most remarkable as the emporium for slaves. It had its harbours, chains, prisons, every thing so amply arranged to favour a brisk traffic that ten thousand slaves could change hands and be shipped in a single day, an operation which would have required thirty-three or thirty-four ships of the size of the vessel in which Paul the apostle was wrecked. There was hardly a port in the Roman empire, convenient for kidnapping foreigners, in which the slave trade was not prosecuted. In most heathen countries, also, men would sell their own children into bondage. The English continued to do so even after the introduction of Christianity. In modern times, when men incurred debts, they have mortgaged their own bodies; the ancients mortgaged their sons and daughters.

"It is a calumny to charge the devastation of Italy upon the barbarians. The large Roman plantations, tilled by slave labour, were its ruin. The careless system impoverished the soil, and wore out even the rich fields of Campania. Large districts were left waste; others had been turned into pastures,

7 [1] Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive [h] the early and latter rain. **8** Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: [i] for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. **9** [k] [2] Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge [l] standeth before the door. **10** [m] Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. **11** Behold, [n] we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of [o] the patience of Job, and have seen [p] the

1 Or, *Be long patient*, or, *Suffer with long patience.*——*h* Deut. 11. 14; Jer. 5. 24; Hos. 6. 3; Joel 2. 23; Zech. 10. 1.——*i* Phil. 4. 5; Heb. 10. 25, 37; 1 Pet. 4. 7.

k Chap. 4. 11.——2 Or, *Groan*, or, *Grieve not.*——*l* Matt. 24. 33; 1 Cor. 4. 5.——*m* Matt. 5. 12; Heb. 11. 35.——*n* Psa. 94. 12; Matt. 5. 10, 11; 10. 22.——*o* Job 1. 21, 22; 2. 10.——*p* Job 42. 10.

an i grazing substituted for tillage.... When Alaric led the Goths into Italy he could not sustain his army in the beautiful but deserted territory.... Slavery had destroyed the democracy, had destroyed the aristocracy, had destroyed the empire."

5. The Christian sufferer under these wrongs pointed to the judgment day, 7-11.

7. **Brethren**—Our apostle turns in contrast, from the **rich men** to the **just** men; from the persecutors to the persecuted. But what shall we think of commentators who are not quite sure that the **rich men** and the **brethren** are not the same! **Be patient**—To the Church in all ages the judgment seat of Christ, even though long millenniums distant, is, conceptually, near at hand. See supplementary note to Matt. xxv, and note on 2 Pet. iii, 8. **Coming**—The PAROUSIA; the second advent, the day when the human race, in resurrection state, stands in the presence of its final Judge. Observe, again, that, unlike **last days,** in verse 3, and **day of slaughter,** in verse 5, this *Parousia* has the Greek article. This indicates that the two former were indefinite events, and the last a definite. That is, the latter indicates *the* one well known and universally expected event, while the former are a special era for these **rich men** and their contemporaries. **Husbandman**—As the planter fixes his conceptual eye upon the day of harvest, so do ye fix your mind's eye upon the final reward. **Long patience**—An intimation of the unknown length of the period intervening before the judgment day. **Early and latter**—The word **rain,** though truly implied, is not, perhaps, a genuine reading. The **early** "rainy season" in Palestine is *autumnal*, extending from first of October to last of December, and even, with slight snow, into January. February brings an interval of fine weather. The **latter rain** is *in spring*, embracing March and April.

8. Emphasis on **ye,** as imitators of the **husbandman. Draweth nigh**—Note on 2 Pet. iii, 8.

9. **Grudge**—Rather, *murmur.* A return to the caution against mutual evil speaking of iv, 11, 12. Lessons of submission under persecution, of patience with each other, and waiting for their final reward, interchange with each other. **Standeth before the door**—Not to be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, but to the *Parousia* of verse 8.

10. **The prophets**—In St. James' view the Christian has a full right to the Old Testament, and he is in his day as the **prophets** of old. Both suffer on earth in solemn hope of a better life. **In the name**—Using **the name** as representative of him.

11. **Count them happy which endure**—The noble saints of old are eulogized. We esteem them **happy** in having left such a record. Be you like them, and you will be finally **happy,** too. **End of the Lord**—The **end** which Jehovah has for the truly patient. "The Lord blessed the latter **end** of **Job** more than his beginning."

end of the Lord; that [q] the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

12 But above all things, my brethren, [r] swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, **nay**; lest ye fall into condemnation.

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? [s] let him sing psalms. **14** Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, [t] anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: **15** And the prayer of faith

[q] Num. 14. 18; Psa. 103. 8.—[r] Matt. 5. 34.

[s] Eph. 5. 19; Col. 3. 16.—[t] Mark 6. 13; 16. 18.

Job xlii, 12. **Lord...mercy**—Job's example does not prove that you will have, like him, a prosperous **latter end**; but it does prove the character of our **Lord**; and that it is his nature to append a happy consequent to our patient antecedents.

6. Cautions against use of violent language, 12.

12. **Above all things**—Not that this was the greatest of crimes, but that it was one of the greatest sins that a good Christian would be likely to incur. **Swear not**—A precept of holy patience. It inculcates a preservation of moral serenity by an avoidance of profane and violent speech. The conversational oath, which is not content with the simple yea and nay, is the result and the token of an impatient and peremptory spirit, akin to the violence of persecutors and brigands. That recklessness which constitutes the charm is the reverse of the calm spirit that rests on God and reveres his name. Of course this has nothing to do with the solemn oath in the court of justice, in which reverence is the spirit, and an end of strife is the aim. **Let your yea,** your affirmation, be not an oath, but a simple **yea. Condemnation**—From violent feeling or action, produced by violent language.

CONCLUSIONS—**1. Consolations for the sad, the merry, the sick; the prayer of faith, 13-18.**

13. Our apostle now shows better methods than swearing to give vent to our moods. **Afflicted**—Suffers one any evil? **Let him** not swear, but **pray! Merry**—Cheery, in good spirits? **Let him** not blaspheme, but **sing psalms.** These are the richest methods of letting forth our abounding nature within the sphere of the blessed and divine. No need of oaths, or bacchanalian riot, in order to the most joyous and happy activities of our souls and voices.

14. **Sick**—And even for bodily illness apostolic Christianity had its divine resource. **The elders of the church**—From this it is to be inferred that organized Churches, with definite authoritative **elders,** existed in the time of this epistle. We find in Acts (xxi, 18) that our St. James had a body of attendant **elders** over whom he appears to be president. **The church**—The body of the people, whose place of worship is called a *synagogue* in ii, 2, as see note. **Let them pray**—As men whose office and power are to **pray. Anointing him with oil**—Wordsworth remarks that there is no indication in primitive history that **oil** was used sacramentally. It was used medically, as a means of restoration, with prayer for the due effect.

Wordsworth notes that the gift of healing remained some time in the Christian Church; for which he quotes the authority of Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius, and others; that the Greek Church still retains the custom here prescribed for the purpose of a gracious restoration to health; whereas the Roman Church retains the ritual of oil, but not for the purpose of recovery, having perverted it to an "extreme unction," or rite for the salvation of those beyond recovery. But the English Church, in the time of reform under Edward VI., after due consideration, disused the anointing with oil, lest it should seem to claim the gift of healing as now existing in the Church. The English Church thereby disclaimed any miraculous power over disease.

shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; [u] and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. **16** Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. [v] The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

[u] Isa. 33. 24; Matt. 9. 2.—[v] Num. 11. 2; Deut. 9. 18-20; Josh. 10. 12; 1 Sam. 12. 18; 1 Kings 13. 6; 2 Kings 4. 33; 19. 15, 20; 20. 2, 4, &c.; Psa. 10. 17; 34. 15; 145. 18; Prov. 15. 29; 28. 9; John 9. 31.

15. **Prayer of faith—Prayer** impregnated with and upborne by **faith.** No formal **prayer,** but such as is further described in verse 16. **Shall**—*Will,* a simple future. **Save**—From temporal death. **Committed sins**—By which the illness has been caused.

16. In order that the **sins** may be known and prayed for, **confess your faults**—This not in the public congregation, where the effect would be bad; but individually, **one to another,** in a most sincere and penitent way. We now have a fuller description of the nature of that **prayer of faith** that will **save. The effectual**—The Greek word (taken in the middle voice) is defined *effective,* which makes it almost a tautology. We prefer, with the old English commentators Hammond, Bull, Benson, and Macknight, to take it in the passive voice, so that it would signify *energized,* or *inwrought,* that is, by the divine Spirit. The Greek commentator Œcumenius considers it passive, and makes it mean *energized,* that is, by the co-operative prayer of the patient himself. And Michaelis (quoted by Huther) defines the phrase, *preces agitante Spiritu sancto effusæ,* prayers poured forth prompted by the Holy Spirit. This last most nearly expresses the true thought. The prayer is a special prayer, *wrought* by the divine *in* the human, by which the supernatural result is produced. This accords with the old distinction between the *faith of justification* and the *faith of miracles.* Such faith is the special gift of God, and is accompanied often, if not always, *with full supernatural assurance that the prayer is to be answered and the work accomplished.*

And this furnishes, we apprehend, a fair answer to Mr. Tyndall's celebrated "prayer test." He proposed that a certain number of sick in a hospital be set apart for whose recovery prayer should be made, and that comparative statistics should decide whether any effect was produced. The fair answer would seem to be, that the English Church, and most Protestant Churches, do not claim that the gift of healing remains in the Church. If it did, with exact results, of course the medical profession could be mostly spared. Nor does the Church claim by prayer at will to overrule the forces of nature. When such things are done in answer to prayer, not only the result but the prayer is supernatural and extraordinary. Note on Matt. xvii, 20. Such a "test" the prophet Elijah did (1 Kings xviii, 17–40) propose with triumphant result; but he did it, evidently, under special divine premonition. And only with such an inspired premonition could any one now, wisely or authoritatively, accept and institute such "test." The supernatural fulfilment of a prayer is a sovereign act, "reserved by the Father in his own power;" and it would, undoubtedly, be a presumptuous act for any one, unimpelled by divine assurance, to contract with a sceptic for a divine interposition. We said on Matt. xvii, 20, (written long before the proposal of the "test,") "God gives no man faith wherewith to play miraculous pranks;" and we now add, *or to make miraculous contracts.* A claim over the forces of nature by prayer at will would be a claim to throw the established course of events out of order, and to take the processes of nature out of the hands of the God of nature. But in the sphere of the Spirit, in the region of mental forces, the case is different. We may say that, *according to the laws of the spiritual world,* in the kingdom of Christ, prayer is the stated antecedent to spiritual effects, to regeneration, sanctification, and salvation. And, hence, the evangelical Church, whatever Romanism may claim, is chary in praying for secular or mechan-

17 Elias was a man [w] subject to like passions as we are, and [x] he prayed [3] earnestly that it might not rain: [y] and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. **18** And [z] he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19 Brethren, [a] if any of you do

w Acts 14. 15.—*x* 1 Kings 17. 1.—3 Or, *in his prayer.*

y Luke 4. 25.—*z* 1 Kings 18. 42, 45.

a Matt. 18. 15.

ical results, and, even when praying for them, leaves them humbly to the divine will. She prays for souls rather than for bodies, and for heavenly rather than for earthly goods.

The word **fervent** is superfluous, having no correspondent Greek word in the text. And the word **effectual** produces, apparently, a flat truism, making the sentence say, that an **effectual prayer** is **effectual. Of a righteous man**—It is the holy prayer, *divinely inwrought*, of a holy **man.**

17. The doctrine confirmed by an illustrious example in Old Testament times. **Subject to like passions**—Simply *like-passioned:* had all the intellectualities and susceptibilities of all human beings. As human as we, and we no more human than he. He was not without some failure of temper, 1 Kings xix, 4, 10. **Prayed earnestly**—Literally, **prayed** *with prayer.* A Hebraism; he **prayed** with prayer that was prayer indeed. **Three years and six months**—One half the sacred *seven.* See our note on "Sacred Numbers," in vol. ii, p. 81.

18. **Prayed**—In the Old Testament narrative (1 Kings xvii, 1, xviii, 42–45) it is not expressly said that he **prayed.** Herein Huther affirms, and Alford does not deny, a discrepancy. But the whole narrative (1 Kings xviii, 36–46) suggests the truth of our apostle's statement. At the time of the evening sacrifice Elijah prays for God's vindication of himself by miracle, and the prayer is answered by fire. As concluding part of the same transaction Elijah is described as first warning Ahab of the approaching rain which closed the miraculous drought, and as then on Carmel putting himself *in the attitude of profound prayer*, while his servant was commissioned to watch and report the tokens of the coming of the "great rain." We are hereby entitled to infer that Elijah's position by divine assignment was that of deep communion and harmony with God. His office was as mediator between God and Israel, to pray for the divine self-vindication, and the self-vindication itself was verified as being a *manifested* answer to his permanent inward and outward prayer. Hence was he a true example for the early Church standing in the same position. When specially gifted with the prayer of miraculous faith by its deep communion with God, and commissioned to vindicate God's revelation of himself in Christianity, the apostolic Church was entitled to offer that prayer which was antecedent to a divine response. It was thereby that the apostle fully comprehended, both by sympathy and similar position, the position of Elijah. And similar to this of James was the view of St. John, as appears by his allusion in Revelation xi, 6. Similar was, doubtless, the view of the entire apostolic Church. And similar, too, was, probably, the view of the devout in the Jewish Church. So Ecclesiasticus xlviii, 1–3: "Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp. He brought a sore famine upon them, and by his zeal he diminished their number. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heaven, and also three times brought down fire." Here is a depth of sympathetic understanding of the divine word that rebukes the shallowness of modern rationalism. The deep divine *assent* of the great prophet, wrought by his commissioning God, was a permanent prayer of which the miracle was the consequent. So that in this deep view our writers make him *cause* the miracles he predicts. **When he prayed again,** then the **heaven** and **earth** obeyed his prayer through an intervening omnipotence. **Her** ac

err from the truth, and one convert him; **20** Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way [b]shall save a soul from death, and [c]shall hide a multitude of sins.

[b] Rom. 11. 14; 1 Cor. 9. 22; 1 Tim. 4. 16.

[c] Prov. 10. 12; 1 Peter 4. 8.

customed **fruit**—So long miraculously withheld.

2. The reclaim of the wanderer, and its reward, 19, 20.

19. **Brethren**—In the closing two verses our apostle completes his series of fraternal suggestions of Christian duty among themselves, in line with verses 16, 12, 10, and many preceding points in the entire epistle. This closing suggestion is of immense importance, touching the restoration of the wandering backslider. **Any one of you**—Bringing the point closely down to each one, as an individual duty and reward. **Err**—A passive verb, and rightly rendered by Alford *be seduced*. **From the truth**—Not merely from Christian doctrine, but from that **word of truth** (i, 18) which is the life-principle of the soul, without which the man is sure to become, practically, as next verse, **a sinner**, and will relapse into **death**. **Convert him**—From error and sin back to **the truth**. A clear implication that sin and death would be the result of his apostasy.

20. **Let him know**—Or, by a reading preferred by Alford, **know** *ye*. What now follows is stated as a universal truth, implying that this individual case would be included under it. **The sinner**—Rather, *a* **sinner**, whoever and wherever he may be. **Error of his way**—**Error**, or wandering, is the characteristic quality of the **way** he is pursuing. **Shall save**—The future far reaching beyond the present. **Death**—The eternal consequent, commenced here and perpetuated hereafter, of unpardoned sin. **Hide**—Cover from sight. So Psalm xxxii, 1, 2, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is *covered*." And Psa. lxxxv, 2, "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast *covered all their sin*." The **sins** which he shall cover are, of course, the **sins** of the **sinner**. The idea of some commentators, that the converter will thereby cover his own sins, is unevangelical. The converter's sins must be covered by his own penitence and faith, not by bringing somebody else to these conditions. Our apostle incites us to the work of converting the **sinner** by the greatness and glory in the result itself. Not only a **soul** is saved **from death**, but a mass of **sins** is forgiven, and no longer offends the eye of a holy God, or the hearts of holy men. Doubtless the blessed work performed in true faith has, also, its own exceeding great reward to the worker. But that reward is not the forgiveness of the converter's **sins**, but consists in his own increased blessedness and his richer final glory. Truly, he that winneth souls is wise; wise for the saved soul, wise for the approbation of heaven and earth, wise for his own soul.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

THE Apostle Peter, until his acquaintance with our Lord, was known simply as Simon, son of Jonas, and, like his father, was a fisherman of Bethsaida, in Galilee. He was a disciple of John the Baptist, and became, in order of time of selection, the third disciple of Jesus. It was in their memorable interview at the Jordan, near where John was continuing his ministry, that Jesus gave him the new name of Κηφᾶς, *Cephas*, the Aramaic form of the Greek Πέτρος, *Peter*, (John i, 42,) significant, doubtless, of what he would afterward become. As a married man he resided at Capernaum, and at his house Jesus seems to have made his home. His first call, and perhaps his second, (Matt. iv, 19,) left him intervals for his trade of fishing; but the third (Luke v, 10) induced his leaving it permanently for the service of Christ, and being finally chosen one of the twelve apostles. Matt. x, 2. In that select company his natural promptness gave him an especial prominence. While he was in some sort a representative of the body, his over-confidence and impulsiveness sometimes led him into blunders, and exposed him to pointed rebukes from his Master. Yet with his prominence was no superiority or headship, but official equality with his fellow-apostles. His leadership in the Pentecostal Church is specially bold and marked; but he is always only *primus inter pares;* and nowhere does any *papacy* appear. To him was given the high honour of opening, against all his former ideas, the door of the Church to the Gentiles, (Acts x, 48,) although his special mission was to be to the Jews. And it is chiefly from his speeches in the Acts that we learn the full gospel as preached by the twelve apostles.

After St. Peter's deliverance from prison, and from Herod Agrippa, A. D. 44, "he went into another place," (Acts xii, 6–17,) and appears afterward in the Acts only at the Jerusalem Council, some six or seven years subsequently, (Acts xv, 7–11,) where he gives his opinion, but neither presides nor pronounces the decree. A few months later he was at Antioch for a little time, (Gal. ii, 11,) where he received a severe rebuke from St. Paul. The mention of his name in 1 Cor. i, 12, etc., does not prove that he was ever at Corinth; and the account of

Dionysius, making him joint founder with St. Paul of the Corinthian Church, is not confirmed by other good authority. Aside from these two notices, we have no certain knowledge of him after the year 44, except in the late of this epistle at "Babylon."

Eusebius makes St. Peter founder of the Antioch Church, and afterward Bishop of Rome for twenty years. Jerome, following and enlarging, tells us that after he was Bishop of Antioch, and had preached in Pontus, Galatia, etc., in the second year of Claudius he journeyed to Rome to oppose Simon Magus, and was Bishop there for twenty-five years, until, in the last year of Nero, he was crucified with his head downward. That St. Peter founded the Antioch Church is contrary to the account in Acts xi, 19–26; and that he was Bishop there is not sufficiently authenticated. The statement of his preaching in Pontus, etc., is taken from Origen, who only supposes it; and that about Simon Magus is probably based on Justin Martyr's misreading of the inscription on a statue to the god Semo. The story of a twenty-five years' Roman episcopate assumes that St. Peter left Palestine before the Council in A. D. 51, which is alike improbable, and inconsistent with Gal. ii, 7–9. His position at the Council was evidently not that of head of the Church. It is not conceivable that, had he been at Rome, St. Paul could have written an epistle rich in salutations to the Roman Church with no greeting for him, or that the epistles sent by him while a prisoner should have no message from his fellow-apostle, or even mention of his name. We, therefore, reject the theory of the Roman residence and episcopate.

It is quite probable that St. Peter, after his release from prison, pursued his missionary work in Palestine until the time of the Council; that after a brief visit at Antioch he went "to the circumcision" in Pontus and the countries westward, visiting Churches already existing, and perhaps planting others; and that at length he turned his steps toward Babylon, on the Euphrates. The DISPERSION consisted of three great branches—the Babylonian, the Asiatic, and the Egyptian; the first of which was the most numerous, (more than two millions, according to Josephus,) wealthy, learned, and noble. It was truly a fitting field. From this place St. Peter wrote his first epistle. Chap. v, 13. Eusebius, however, writes: "Peter mentions Mark in his first epistle, which, *they say*, he wrote in Rome itself, and that he signifies this in calling that city figuratively Babylon." But the authority is too weak. Besides, that St. John, thirty-five years later, so used the name in his highly-wrought symbolic diction, is no reason for the unpoetic Peter's using it in the same way. Babylon in Egypt, and two or three other places of the same name, have had advocates, but there is no good ground to doubt that the Assyrian Babylon is meant. The fact that the countries

to which the epistle is addressed are named in the order in which a writer at Babylon would naturally view them, confirms this conclusion.

The epistle was universally accepted as authentic in the early Church, unless by one or two unimportant exceptions. It is quoted by Polycarp, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Theodotus, Tertullian, and Eusebius; and, though not found in the Muratorian Canon, it is in the Peshito. Modern critics have objected to it as lacking originality or definite purpose, or as being too like in its expressions to those of St. Paul. That both apostles drew from the same fount cannot be doubted; and it were therefore absurd to expect their disagreement. The Pauline and Petrine theologies are opposed in no respect, save in the minds of the Tübingen critics. St. Peter was unquestionably familiar with most of the writings of his illustrious collaborator, and perhaps all of them, except First and Second Timothy and Titus; and it is not difficult to imagine, with Wordsworth, that in writing to persons who had been told of a disagreement between them in order to undermine St. Paul's authority, he purposely used some of the latter's thoughts and almost his expressions. Yet in treating the same topics it is inevitable that close resemblances should have occurred, but they are accompanied by such differences in thought and expression as prove both originality and independency. The style of our apostle is his own. His Judaic mind is full of Old Testament truth and imagery, but he subordinates it to the kingdom and glory of Christ. His purpose in writing is to encourage his readers to fidelity and endurance in view of their severe trials, and to confirm them in the broad truths of the gospel. Chap. v, 12. The *suffering* and the *glory* of both Christ and his people are the central point of his doctrine, encouragement, and exhortation for practical life.

The *elect strangers of the dispersion* would, of itself alone, indicate that the epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians, as was held by Eusebius, Jerome, Theophylact, Grotius, Bengel, and others; but such passages as chap. i, 14; ii, 10; and iv, 3, 4, conclusively show that both Jewish and Gentile Christians are included.

As to the proper date of the epistle, we place it as late as A. D. 63, on account of the manifest acquaintance with St. Paul's epistles, written during his first imprisonment. Mark was at Rome in A. D. 62, and was about going to Colosse, (Col. iv, 10;) and in A. D. 67 or 68 he was in Asia, perhaps at Ephesus. 2 Tim. iv, 11. He was at Babylon at the time of this writing, (chap. v, 13,) and probably in this interval. It was in a time of persecution, but plainly not so severe as that under Nero; and it was after the epithet "Christian" (chap. iv, 16) had become familiarly and widely known. The most probable time is early in A. D. 64.

That St. Peter suffered martyrdom we know from John xxi, 18, 19, written after his death. The universal testimony of antiquity, east and west, is, that he was martyred at Rome by the order of Nero. So much of historic error and evident fable surrounds this testimony that it inevitably falls under heavy suspicion; but, on the other hand, there is no contrary statement, as might have been expected if it were without foundation. Tertullian first mentions his crucifixion, and says he was tied to the cross with cords; Origen, that he was fastened to the cross *κατὰ κεφάλης*, *by the head*, which Eusebius follows, only using the word "crucified;" and Jerome, expanding, says: "He was affixed to the cross, and crowned with martyrdom, with his head turned to the earth and his feet raised aloft, asserting that he was unworthy to be crucified as was his Lord." Touching as is the story, the simple fact appears that he was crucified, not "head downward," but fastened to the cross by the head. It seems most probable that the apostle was pursuing his work in Babylon when he was arrested by order of Nero, who had already seized St. Paul, that he was carried prisoner to Rome, and there executed in the last year of the tyrant's reign.

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THE

FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

CHAPTER I.

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers [a]scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 [b]Elect [c]according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, [d]through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and [e]sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: [f]Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

[a] John 7. 35; Acts 2. 5, 9; James 1. 1.—[b] Eph. 1. 4; chap. 2. 9.—[c] Rom. 8. 29; 11. 2.

[d] 2 Thess. 2. 13.—[e] Heb. 10. 22; 12. 24.—[f] Rom. 1. 7; 2 Peter 1. 2; Jude 2.

CHAPTER I.

Apostolic salutation, 1, 2.

1. **Peter**—The Greek for Cephas. See Introduction. **An apostle**—And therefore entitled to a hearing. Unlike St. Paul, his apostleship was never questioned. Here, if anywhere, would be the place for an assertion also of his dignity as prince of the apostles, and head of the Church, had he possessed it; its omission is good proof that this popish pretence was then unknown. **To the strangers scattered**—Literally, *to the elect sojourners of the dispersion.* On *the dispersion*, see notes on James i, 1 and Acts xxvi, 7.

Pontus—Among St. Peter's hearers on the Pentecost, were "dwellers in ...Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia," (Acts ii, 9, 10;) and this epistle is addressed to about the same regions. One writing at Babylon would naturally take the provinces in the order named. **Pontus**—In the north-east, on the Black Sea, the country of Aquila. Acts xviii, 2. To the south-west of Pontus lay **Galatia,** to whose Churches St. Paul, their founder, addressed an epistle. Further to the south and east was **Cappadocia,** where, we may believe, the gospel was early planted by converts of the Pentecost. **Asia** means here the Proconsular Asia of the Romans, including the countries west of those already named, in which were prosperous and well known Churches. See note on Rev. i, 11.

2. **Elect**—Persons *selected* or *chosen out* of the multitudes of those countries, leaving large numbers behind. There is no ground for the assumption by expositors that this election is to eternal blessedness. Not only is it without intimation in the passage, but it is distinctly stated to be **unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,** which belong to this present life. Equally unfounded is the assumption that **foreknowledge** signifies, or implies, the divine love, or counsel, or purpose. It simply means, *knowledge beforehand.* See note on Romans viii, 29. God's **foreknowledge** always precedes election; and our apostle here teaches that the election is grounded upon it. **Father**—Each person of the blessed Trinity has his share in the work of salvation. **Through sanctification**—Separation from the world and holy consecration to God, effected by the Holy Spirit, are the means of entering the class of the **elect. Unto obedience**—This is one of the objects and ends of the divine choosing. Note on Rom. ix, 13, paragraph 5. **Sprinkling**—A comparison of Exod. xxiv, 6–8 with Heb. ix, 11–14, shows that the reference is to the **blood of Jesus Christ** in its purifying, rather than in its expiating power. Walking in all holy obedience, the believer, trusting in the blood of the cross, realizes not only pardon, but the continual cleansing of his soul. **Grace**—See the forms of salutation in St. Paul. "May your peace be multiplied," was a form frequent with the rabbies.

3 [g] Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which [h] according to his [i] abundant mercy [i] hath begotten us again unto a lively hope [k] by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, [l] and that fadeth not away, [m] reserved in heaven [n] for you, 5 [n] Who are kept by the

[g] 2 Cor. 1, 3; Eph. 1, 3.—[h] Tit. 3, 5.—[i] Gr., *much*.—[i] John 3, 3, 5; James 1, 18.—[k] 1 Cor. 15, 20; 1 Thess. 4, 14; chap. 3, 21.

[l] Chapter 5, 4.—[m] Colossians 1, 5; 2 Timothy 4, 8.—[n] Or, *for us*.—[n] John 10, 28; 17, 11; Jude 1.

I. The blessedness and glory of the Gospel Salvation, i, 3–ii, 8.

1. **Hope looking toward the heavenly inheritance, 3–5.**

3. **Blessed**—With an outburst of joy the apostle directs the thoughts of his suffering brethren toward the *much* **mercy** which has prepared for them the heavenly inheritance, so glorious in comparison with their present condition. **God... Father**—"God who is the Father of Jesus Christ," says Steiger; thus distinguishing him from all other gods, and declaring him as known only in his Son. **Begotten us again**—Once spiritually dead and without hope; now brought into a new life by the Holy Spirit, through whom the merciful God regenerates us. **Lively hope**—Better, *living hope*, the result of the new birth. Both Jews and heathen had a belief in a future state, but a *new life* is given to the **hope** by **the resurrection of Jesus Christ.** What before was theory, is now become demonstrated fact. Christ's resurrection is a pledge to all his people of their own resurrection. Their hope of it, and of the glory that shall follow, is full of life and vigour, and stirs them to ceaseless endeavours to gain the blessed end.

4. **An inheritance**—A second statement of the result of the new birth, showing the corresponding external object of the internal **hope.** The apostle, himself a Jew, labouring chiefly among the Jews, and writing to Churches largely composed of Jewish Christians, naturally recurs to a Hebrew imagery for the full expression of his thought. The land of Canaan, given to their fathers for an inheritance forever, (Gen. xvii, 8,) had been lost by transgression; but these dispersed, homeless sojourners are now assured of a heavenly country and an eternal home. The inheritance belongs to the children brought by the new birth into the family of God; for, "if children, then heirs." Rom. viii, 17. Heaven is a free gift; yet it is bestowed in strict accordance with law. Three negative but gloriously descriptive words represent the character of the inheritance. **Incorruptible**—With no spring within of death or evil to induce decay, or corruption, or destruction. **Undefiled**—Without spot or stain of sin externally. **Fadeth not**—Unlike the quickly withering flower, it remains in perpetual freshness and beauty. **Reserved**—Laid up and carefully watched over and guarded. **In heaven**—Where the God of glory dwells. The earthly inheritance had been invaded by Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Romans; its wealth plundered and its holy places ravaged and destroyed; but the heavenly Canaan is so protected by our glorious Lord that it is absolutely and forever secure. **For you**—The change of person from **us** to **you** permits a direct impressive assurance of the certainty of the **inheritance** to the faithful, and an admonition as well to the **elect,** to take heed that they do not forfeit their election.

5. **Kept**—A military word implying guarding, as in a fortress. The inheritance is kept in heaven for you; you are kept on earth for the inheritance. Old Testament imagery sets forth God as a shield, refuge, fortress, and tower, showing the perfect security of them who dwell in him. Blessed are they whose guard Omnipotence becomes! Note on John xvii, 12; Rom. viii, 35. **By the power**—Literally, *who in the power of God are being guarded through faith.* **Power** is the element in which

power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 [o]Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now [p]for a season, if need be, [q]ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: **7** That [r]the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though [s]it be tried with fire, [t]might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8 [u]Whom having not seen, ye love; [v]in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye re-

o Matt. 5. 12; Rom. 12. 12; 2 Cor. 6. 10.——*p* 2 Cor. 4. 17; chap. 5. 10.——*q* James 1. 2.——*r* James 1. 3; chap. 4. 12.——*s* Job 23. 10; Psalm 66. 10; Prov. 17. 3; Zech. 13. 9; 1 Cor. 3. 13.——*t* Rom. 2. 7, 10; 1 Cor. 4. 5; 2 Thess. 1. 7.——*u* 1 John 4. 20.——*v* John 20. 29; 2 Cor. 5. 7; Heb. 11. 1.

they live and are kept; but it is the power of the Holy Spirit, abiding with all believers. Carnal professors and Christless backsliders know it not. Only **through faith** on man's part, as the means, continually laying hold of the Holy Spirit, does the power of God become efficient. **Unto salvation**—Showing the *end* of the *being kept*: namely, the actual possession of the inheritance. It is complete and final deliverance from the curse of sin, including victory over death in the resurrection; and it is also, on the positive side, entrance into the fulness of eternal glory. **Ready**—It is fully prepared; but its certain and glorious manifestation will be only at the day of judgment.

2. Joy in the blissful prospect in contrast with severe temporary trial, 6, 7.

6. **Wherein**—Referring to verses 3–5. generally. **Rejoice**—With a deep, holy exultation. **In heaviness**—Better, *afflicted*, or *made sorrowful*, and yet exulting. The **manifold temptations** were the various trials of their Christian integrity to which they were exposed, in which they had suffered and were still to suffer. The path to glory for those early Christians lay through opposition and tribulation. Their religion made no compromise with other beliefs; its friends were subjects of constant social reproach and frequent persecutions. They were tried on every side and in every way. It was good to be reminded that the **season** was short in any event, and very short as compared with eternity. The **need** of these **troubles was not in God's** imposing them, but in the circumstances in which they were providentially placed, and the malignancy of their Jewish and heathen neighbours.

7. **That the trial**—It is a part of God's plan that the **faith** of his people shall be tested and proved. So Abraham was tried, (Hebrews xi, 17,) and Jesus himself underwent the terrible ordeal. The troubles and afflictions incident to all earthly conditions fall under this head, as do also the allurements of the world, and whatever would draw us from Christ. As **gold,** which is destroyed in the using, is so **precious** in the eyes of men that they nevertheless prove and purify it **with fire,** so **faith,** in God's sight **much more precious than gold,** must undergo a like fiery ordeal; and the faith that endures the test will **be found** at the judgment to be pure and genuine, and will receive, as the result, **praise, honour,** and **glory** from the Judge.

3. Joy in present blessedness, 8, 9.

8. **Ye love**—This is the true order: **faith** in the crucified and risen, but yet unseen, Christ, with the deepest **love** as its fruit, producing the purest **joy.** It may be St. Peter's comment on our Lord's words to Thomas, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John xx, 29. The American people of the present generation have **not seen** Washington, yet they profoundly **love** him. But Christ will soon reveal himself to human sight. **Ye rejoice**—The same Greek as **greatly rejoice,** in verse 6, meaning exultation expressing itself. Yet the **joy** cannot be fully told, for it is even now pervaded with the

joice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: **9** Receiving [w] the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who [x] prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: **11** Searching what, or what manner of time [y] the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand [z] the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 [a] Unto whom it was revealed, that [b] not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you

w Rom. 6. 22.—*x* Gen. 49. 10; Daniel 2. 44; Haggai 2. 7; Zech. 6. 12; Matt. 13. 17; Luke 10. 24; 2 Pet. 1. 19.—*y* Chap. 3. 19; 2 Pet. 1. 21.

z Psalm 22. 6; Isa. 53. 3; Dan. 9. 26; Luke 24. 25, 26, 44, 46; John 12. 41; Acts 26. 22.—*a* Dan. 9. 24; 12. 9, 13.—*b* Heb. 11. 13.

glory which will be complete in heaven.

9. **Receiving . . . salvation** — A present salvation, testified to by the renewing Holy Spirit. It differs from that in verse 5 only in degree. This saves now—that in the day of judgment; this saves from sin, its guilt and power—that "from wrath" and hell, (Rom. v. 9;) this saves the soul—that saves both soul and body; this is salvation begun—that is salvation finished forever.

4. The ancient prophets studying their predictions of the coming Christ, 10-12.

This doctrine was not then newly heard of, but had been known, foretold, and earnestly studied by God's prophets of former ages.

10. **Prophets**—As on the Pentecost, St. Peter here, too, grounds his doctrine on the Old Testament prophecy. He then quoted Joel and David, (Acts ii, 16–21, 25–31.) Later, after citing Moses, he said, "All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." Acts iii, 24. Their great subject was **the grace** that God had determined to show the world in the gift of **salvation.** The full import of their prophecies they did not themselves understand. They therefore **inquired**—*earnestly sought*—and **searched diligently**—comparing prophecy with prophecy, to learn their full depth of meaning.

11. **Searching**—A special point of inquiry related to the **time** of the advent; **what,** referring to the date; and **what manner,** to events preceding and accompanying it, and characterizing the period. The case of Daniel furnishes a notable illustration. Dan. vii, 16–28; ix, 22–27; xii. 8. **The Spirit of Christ**—The Holy Spirit who inspired them. 2 Pet. i, 21. As he is the Spirit of God, it follows that Christ is God. In his office of revealing the truths relating to Christ, he **testified** to the prophets of the coming redemption. **Sufferings** — The term includes not only the fact, but the occasion of it as well, as in consequence of sin, and in voluntarily bearing its penalty. See Isa. liii, 4–7. The Jews lost sight of the Messiah as a sufferer in their hope of him as a triumphing king, forgetting that through suffering he was to attain his crown. Yet this was the central point to which the institutions and teachings of the Old Testament converged. **Glory** — Better, *glories;* meaning, in his victory over death, in his resurrection, his ascension to heaven, his sending the Holy Spirit, and whatever belongs to him in his glorious exaltation to the mediatorial throne, including the conversion, sanctification, and glorification of believers. These, equally with his sufferings, were distinct subjects of prophecy; and the sufferings are represented as introducing the glories.

12. **It was revealed**—This verse presents an additional truth revealed to, and well understood by, the prophets. **The things** foretold are identical with those declared by the apostles as having occurred. The long succession of prophets, moved by the Holy Spirit, were at one with the evangelists, filled with the same Holy

by them that have preached the gospel unto you with [c] the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; [d] which things the angels desire to look into.

13 Wherefore [e] gird up the loins of your mind, [f] be sober, and hope [3] to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you [g] at the revelation of Jesus Christ; **14** As obedient children, [h] not fashioning yourselves according to the former

c Acts 2. 4.—*d* Exod. 25. 20; Dan. 8. 13; Eph. 3. 10.—*e* Luke 12. 35; Eph. 6. 14.—*f* Luke 21. 34; Rom. 13. 13; 1 Thess. 5. 6.

3 Greek, *perfectly*.—*g* Luke 17. 30; 1 Cor. 1. 7; 2 Thess. 1. 7.—*h* Romans 12. 2; chapter 4. 2.

Spirit, **sent down from heaven** on the Pentecost, and abiding with his ministers and his Church. Thus does St. Peter endorse St. Paul, the chief founder of the Churches to which he is writing.

5. Angelic interest in the great salvation, 12.

Which things—Namely, those once predicted and now preached. That **the angels** of God, of an order of beings different from and higher than men, *earnestly* **desire to look into** the work of redemption, marks it as of the highest excellence. The term **look into** signifies *to bend forward in order to look more closely, or to see to the bottom.* The facts of the wonderful story, from the promise in Eden to the exaltation to the right hand of God, they are familiar with. That they understand the philosophy of redemption does not admit of question. What they so closely scrutinize is, the practical working of the plan in actually accomplishing what it proposes and promises, in saving from sin and keeping them that believe. In this St. Peter agrees with St. Paul in Eph. iii, 10.

6. General exhortations based upon the excellency of the gospel salvation, 13-ii, 8.

a. *Exhortation to firm, enduring hope*, 13.

13. **Wherefore**—Referring to the entire foregoing description. **Gird up**—Literally, *having girded up*, aorist, once for all, showing the completeness of the condition in which the **hope** is to be exercised. The figure (as in our Lord's words in Luke xii, 35, "Let your loins be girded about") of the tucking up of the long flowing robe and tightening the girdle implies preparation for work, running, fighting, or other energetic action. The meaning is, Let your whole spiritual nature be so disentangled from earthly things, and intently fixed on the heavenly and eternal, that you will be always ready and on the alert for your business as Christians. **Sober**—*Being sober*, self-restrained, and held well in hand against temptation, appetite, cares, pleasures, and spiritual sloth. **Hope**—The emphatic word. *Desire* it as of infinite worth; *expect* it because bought and promised. **To the end**—Rather, *perfectly*, entirely, with no doubt, diminution, interruption, or failure. **Grace**—The inheritance and eternal salvation, named from its source. **Revelation**—At the visible second advent. St. Peter uses the word ἀποκάλυψις, or its verb, five times in this epistle in reference to that day. Chap. i, 5, 7, 13; iv, 13; v, 1.

b. *Exhortation to obedience after the pattern of Christ*, 14–16.

14. As the preceding verse points to the inward state and action, and this to external conduct, with its own proper ground, it is better, with Tregelles, Alford, and others, to read here as beginning a new paragraph. **Obedient children**—Literally, *children of obedience.* See Winer, xxxiv, b. 2. As the child partakes of the nature of the parent, such are they whose moral natures are so imbued with the spirit of obedience that it has become a controlling second nature. See note on Eph. ii, 2. The condition presupposed is in the "begotten again" of verse 3, and the "born again" of verse 23. In such this spirit reigns, and the demand of holiness naturally follows. **Not... lusts**—Negatively. The sort of conduct to which they led is described in chapter iv, 3, and includes whatever is contrary to the holy example of

lusts [i] in your ignorance: **15** [k] But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; **16** Because it is written, [l] Be ye holy; for I am holy. **17** And if ye call on the Father, [m] who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, [n] pass the time of your [o] sojourning *here* in fear: **18** Forasmuch as ye know [p] that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation [q] *received* by tradition from your fathers; **19** But [r] with the precious blood of

i Acts 17. 30; 1 Thess. 4. 5.—*k* 2 Cor. 7. 1; 1 Thess. 4. 3; Heb. 12. 14; 2 Pet. 3. 11.—*l* Lev. 11. 44.—*m* Deuteronomy 10. 17; Acts 10. 34; Romans 2. 11.

n 2 Cor. 7. 1; Phil. 2. 12; Heb. 12. 28.—*o* 2 Cor. 5. 6; Heb. 11. 13; chap. 2. 11.—*p* 1 Cor. 6. 20.—*q* Ezek. 20. 18; chap. 4. 3.—*r* Acts 20. 28; Eph. 1. 7; Heb. 9. 12; Rev. 5. 9.

Christ. **Ignorance**—Before receiving the knowledge of the gospel, or, on the part of the heathen, of the true God.

15, 16. The positive side of the holiness is now set forth, with the same idea of **fashioning yourself.** Translate, *but after the example of the Holy One who called you, be ye also yourselves holy in all your conduct.* He is the model of all holiness. **Called**—From the former lusts and life. **Conversation**—Conduct, behaviour, with the old idea of walking and turning about, and meaning that holiness is to pervade every part of the life. **Written**—See Lev. xi, 44; xix, 2; xx, 7, 26. The ritual separation from impurity in these passages is typical of the moral sanctification required then as now. St. Peter's use of the quotation brings out its spiritual significance as freed from the ritualistic, and presents it as the law of the New Testament. God is **holy** in his very essence, and the fountain of all holiness in men. His holiness is the *reason* for their holiness, as well as its pattern.

c. *Exhortation to fear in view of the judgment*, 17–21.

17. **If...Father**—Better, *since ye call on him as Father*, being children, as they were, of him who is also their Judge. **Without respect**—Impartially; regarding the **work** of **every man,** unerringly read by the all-seeing eye, and not his race, birth, colour, wealth, or social position. The apostle learned this doctrine, and announced it in his speech, at the house of Cornelius. Acts x, 34, 35. **Pass**—The verb corresponds to **conversation** in verse 15. **Sojourning**—Away from home, as in a foreign land. The feeling that they were as exiles seems to have been fixed deep in the souls of the early Christians. **In fear**—The proper complement of **hope,** verse 13. Hope unguarded becomes careless and baseless; fear without hope is wretched and despairing. True **fear,** opposed to all carnal security, is reverential, and anxious that nothing shall be found wanting in the day of judgment. For, though a tenderly loving father, God is a sternly just judge.

18. A second argument for **fear** is based upon the price of redemption. **Know**—And should bear in mind. **Redeemed**—By the payment of a ransom to the righteous Lawgiver and Judge, whose curse is upon all transgression. This legally opens the way for the actual deliverance of the ransomed. Both are here meant. Because of the ransom, they had been delivered from the **vain,** profitless life in which their idolatrous **fathers** had taught their children.

19. **Precious blood**—The order of the Greek words is, *but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*, even *of Christ.* **Precious**—Of great value, in contrast with the **corruptible things** that for this purpose had no worth. **Blood**—Shed in expiation. **Lamb**—The lamb of sacrifice must be **without blemish,** that is, not blind, maimed, lame, or in any way defective, (Lev. xxii, 20–24; Mal. i, 8;) and also **without spot,** or external defilement. Only such a lamb could be legally offered. Add, now, that this blood which redeems is the blood **of Christ,** God's own sinless Son, and the very costliness of redemp-

Christ, [s] as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: **20** [t] Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest [u] in these last times for you, **21** Who by him do believe in God, [v] that raised him up from the dead, and [w] gave him glory;

[s] Exod. 12. 5; Isa. 53. 7; John 1. 29, 36; 1 Cor. 5. 7.—[t] Rom. 3. 25; 16. 25, 26; Eph. 3. 9, 11; Col. 1. 26; 2 Tim. 1. 9; Titus 1. 2, 3; Rev. 13. 8.—[u] Gal. 4. 4; Eph. 1. 10; Heb. 1. 2.

tion becomes a weighty reason for **fear** lest its benefits be lost.

20. **Foreordained** — Rather, *foreknown.* In itself the word means nothing else. St. Peter, in his speech on the Pentecost, speaks of Christ as "*delivered by the determinate counsel* (or decree) *and foreknowledge of God,*" (Acts ii, 23;) but here he speaks only of the foreknowledge. Most assuredly it was the purpose of God, framed **before** the creation of **the world,** to save men through Christ's voluntary sacrifice; but it is not so stated here, nor was there occasion for it. Evidently the apostle is replying to a supposed objection, that this redemption by Christ is a new thing—a remedy that, after ages of sin and woe, suddenly came into the mind of God; and, to the confirmation of believers and confusion of sceptics, he meets it by saying that God had known it all along, even from eternity, as he also foreknew man's fall and wretchedness. Christ was, in the mind of God, foreknown and certain as the lamb of sacrifice, although but lately made **manifest** to the sight and knowledge of men in his incarnation. This fills out the contrast, and furnishes perfect stability for faith.

21. **By him**—As mediator. Only through him do we **believe in God;** not in *a* god, as did the heathen, nor in the true God as the Jew knew him, the deliverer from Egypt, but the God who **raised** our Lord **from the dead,** and exalted him to the throne of **glory.** (See St. Peter's speech, Acts ii, 22–36.) **Faith. . . hope**—Not in order that they **might,** but rather so that they *do,* as a result of that resurrection and glorification, sweetly rest **in God.**

that your faith and hope might be in God. **22** Seeing ye [x] have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned [y] love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: **23** [z] Being born again, not of corruptible

[v] Acts 2. 24.—[w] Matt. 28. 18; Acts 2. 33; Eph. 1. 20; Phil. 2. 9; Heb. 2. 9.—[x] Acts 15. 9.—[y] Rom. 12. 9; 1 Thess. 4. 9; 1 Tim 1 5 Heb. 13. 1.—[z] John 1. 13.

d. *Exhortation to fervent love to one another,* 22–25.

22. **Purified**—In a degree, at least, and by the means that the gospel provides. **By obeying**—Literally, *in obedience,* for only so is the faith possible by which purity is wrought. Thus, Mr. Wesley teaches that the sanctifying Spirit is to be looked for, "not in careless indifference, or indolent inactivity, but in vigorous, universal obedience; in denying ourselves, and in taking up our cross daily: as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God."—*Works,* vol. vi, page 505. **The truth**—Of the gospel. Yielded to, it subjects to itself those who receive it, and leads them to faith and the Holy Spirit, the Purifier. **Unfeigned**—Without hypocrisy or pretence. **Love of the brethren**—Higher and stronger than common love, from which both St. Peter and St. Paul distinguish it. **Fervently**—Intensely, with all the powers on the stretch, as will be if it truly come out of a purified **heart.**

23. **Born again**—Mutual brotherly love among Christians has its foundation and reason in the common spiritual birth by which they become sons and daughters together in the family of God. **Not of corruptible seed**—As in the way of ordinary human generation; but of **incorruptible** seed, namely, by the power of the Holy Spirit imparting the divine nature, through the medium of the **word** or doctrine **of God,** (parallel to **truth,** in ver. 22,) preached and believed. And this **word liveth and abideth,** for whatever God has said is eternally true.

seed, but of incorruptible, [a]by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. **24** [a]For [b]all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: **25** [c]But the word of the Lord endureth forever. [d]And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

a Jas. 1. 18; 1 John 3. 9.—4 Or, *for that.*—*b* Psa. 103. 15; Isa. 40. 6.—*c* Psa. 102. 12, 26; Isa. 40. 8; Luke 16. 17.—*d* John 1. 1, 14; 1 John 1. 1, 3.

24. **For**—Confirming the statement that the word of God lives and abides, by Isaiah, xl, 5–7, probably quoted from memory and accommodated. It beautifully places the frailty and transitoriness of man and his works in contrast with the enduring character of God's word. **Flesh**—Man in his earthly, human life. **Glory**—His best and grandest possessions and productions, in which he prides himself, and which win admiration and honour from others, whether strength, wealth, fame, place, or power. But whatever they promise, like the **grass** they wither in an hour, and, like the leaves of its faded **flower,** they quickly fall.

25. And now comes the special application: **the gospel,** which was **preached unto you** by the first missionaries, and is now diffused among you, by which you were brought into a new spiritual life, is the very **word** of God that **endureth forever.** It surely follows that the faith and hope of the Christian rest upon a secure foundation.

CHAPTER II.

e. *Exhortation to growth in spiritual life,* 1–8.

1. **Wherefore**—Because in the new birth (chap. i, 23) you have begun a new life, to which the things named are antagonistic. **Laying aside**—Aorist, *having laid aside,* once for all, at conversion, these deadly foes of love. **Malice** is disposed to injure another, or to rejoice in his harm; **guile** is deceitful and insincere; **hypocrisies** counterfeit and put forth the seeming for the being; **envies** are displeased at and depreciate the ability, prosperity, performance, or reputation of others; **evil-speakings** insinuate, defame, backbite, and carry injurious tales. Each of this horrid family springs out of those before it. They are, as a foul garment, *put off.*

CHAPTER II.

WHEREFORE [a]laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, **2** [b]As newborn babes, desire the sincere [c]milk of the

a Eph. 4. 22; Col. 3. 8; Heb. 12. 1; James 1. 21.—*b* Matt. 18. 3; Mark 10. 15; Rom. 6. 4; 1 Cor. 14. 20.—*c* 1 Cor. 3. 2; Heb. 5. 12.

2. **As new-born babes**—Born of the word of God, chap. i, 23. The members of these churches were not recent converts, as some suppose; for, through the labors of St. Paul and others, many churches in those countries had been founded nearly a score of years previously. If they were, we must not only take **babes** as in opposition to *men,* but **milk** as in opposition to *strong meat,* as in 1 Cor. iii, 2, and Heb. v, 12. But no such contrast is intimated, and the whole tone of the epistle indicates vigour and large experience. The contrast is rather of babes and believers, and in a single respect: as babes, even the newly born, having once tasted the mother's milk afterward desire it and are nourished by it, so the spiritually born, whether just now or long ago, having once tasted of the spiritual milk of the gospel, desire it as the food of their souls. Milk is simply the food, and not the kind of food: the kind is indicated in the adjective *λογικὸν,* translated here **of the word,** and **sincere,** that is, guileless, unadulterated, and undiluted. Irenæus says of heretics, "They mix chalk with their milk." **Milk,** then, is the true doctrine of the gospel—**the word** which nourishes the soul. **Grow**—To full maturity in knowledge and grace. The best authorities add *unto salvation,* that is, toward eternal blessedness.

word, that ye may grow thereby:
3 If so be ye have [d] tasted that the Lord *is* gracious. 4 To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, [e] disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious,
5 [f] Ye also, as lively stones, [1] are built up [g] a spiritual house, [h] a holy priesthood, to offer up [i] spiritual sacrifices, [k] acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, [l] Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe *he is* [2] precious: but unto them which be disobedient, [m] the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head

d Psa. 34. 8; Heb. 6. 5.——*e* Psa. 118. 22; Matt. 21. 42; Acts 4. 11.——*f* Eph. 2. 21.——1 Or, *be ye built.*——*g* Heb. 3. 6.——*h* Isaiah 61. 6.——*i* Hos. 14. 2; Mal. 1. 11; Rom. 12. 1; Heb. 13. 15.——*k* Phil. 4. 18.——*l* Isaiah 28. 16; Rom. 9. 33.——2 Or, *an honour.*——*m* Psa. 118. 22; Matt. 21. 42; Acts 4. 11.

3. **Tasted**—And thus know by experience, Psa. xxxiv, 8. **Gracious**—Good, kind. Alford suggests that the simplest meaning, as applied to food, is meant: as the Vulgate, *dulcis, sweet.*

4. The same lesson is now enforced by representing Christian growth under the figure of building. **Coming**—Daily and continually, by faith. **A living stone**—The reference is to Isa. viii, 14, 15; xxviii, 16; Psa. cxviii, 22; combined by the apostle. Christ is not here compared to a living stone: he *is himself* the living stone, the foundation stone of the spiritual edifice, the church; nay, he is the corner stone, binding together its walls. See note on Eph. ii, 20. He is called **living**, having full life in himself, and being the fountain of all life to his followers. **Disallowed**—Rejected by the Sanhedrin, the official representatives of the nation and builders of the Church, and cast aside as a vile blasphemer; but **chosen** out of all possible stones by **God**, as in his sight the most perfectly fitted to be the foundation of the Church. **Precious**—Better, *honoured*, that is, with this high dignity.

5. **Lively stones**—Rather, *living stones*, deriving their life from Christ. Every believer, by this reception of spiritual life, becomes like his Lord, and also enters as a stone into the **spiritual house** built upon Christ. **Are built up**—Rather, *are being built up*, by the Holy Spirit cementing believers with one another and with Christ. **Holy priesthood**—Rather, *For* a holy priesthood. They are God's temple that they may be God's priests, set apart and purified, for the purpose of offering up **spiritual sacrifices.** This is said, not of a distinct class, as of ministers, but of the whole body of believers. **Offer up** is the common word for presenting upon the altar; but the **sacrifices** are bloodless and **spiritual,** and offered under the influences of the Holy Spirit. First of all, is the sacrifice of ourselves and our entire existence; then follow our thoughts, words, actions, with the specific acts of thanksgiving, praise, prayer, mercy, and beneficence, for the Lord's sake. It is significant that St. Peter omits all intimation of a sacerdotal order, with himself at its head, and all allusion to himself as of more importance in building God's house than any of his brother apostles.

6. **Wherefore**—Better, *because.* Isa. xxviii, 16. **Zion**—Jerusalem; not Rome. **Believeth**—Man's essential part in the work of building. **Confounded**—Put to shame or disappointment, for Christ shall never fail him.

7, 8. **Precious**—Rather, *the honour.* The argument is, since believing is the means of building upon Christ, the living stone, who is honoured (verse 4) with the dignity of being the chief corner-stone, and since the believer shall not come to shame, the result **to you,** therefore, who do **believe,** is *the honour* of not being put to shame. In sharp contrast with this is the shame which befalls the unbelieving. **Disobedient**—The effect of unbelief. To this class, the **stone** rejected by the Jewish **builders** is become three things: 1. Notwithstanding their scorn, God has selected and made him the **head**

of the corner, **8** [n]And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [o]*even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: [p]whereunto also they were appointed.

9 But ye *are* [q]a chosen generation, [r]a royal priesthood, [s]a holy nation, [t3]a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the [4]praises of him who hath called you out of [u]darkness into his marvellous light: **10** [v]Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* [w]as strangers and pilgrims, [x]abstain from fleshly lusts, [y]which war against the soul; **12** [z]Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, [5]whereas they

n Isaiah 8. 14; Luke 2. 34; Rom. 9. 33.—*o* 1 Cor. 1. 23.—*p* Exod. 9. 16; Rom. 9. 22; 1 Thess. 5. 9; Jude 4.—*q* Deut. 10. 15.—*r* Exod. 19. 5, 6; Rev. 1. 6.—*s* John 17. 19; 1 Cor. 3. 17; 2 Tim. 1. 9.—*t* Deut. 4. 20; Acts 20. 28; Eph. 1. 14; Titus 2. 14.—3 Or, *a purchased people.*

—4 Or, *virtues.*—*u* Acts 26. 18; Eph 5. 8; Col. 1. 13; 1 Thess. 5. 4.—*v* Hos. 1. 9; Rom. 9. 25.—*w* 1 Chron. 29. 15; Psa. 39. 12; Heb. 11. 13.—*x* Rom. 13. 14; Gal. 5. 16.—*y* James 4. 1.—*z* Romans 12. 17; 2 Corinthians 8. 21; Philippians 2. 15; Titus 2. 8.—5 Or, *wherein.*

of the corner. If, instead of building upon it, as they may, they carelessly pass it by, it becomes, 2. A **stone of stumbling,** to strike against to their hurt; and 3. A **rock of offence,** solidly fixed, dashing against which they fall and are injured. Shame, disgrace, and eternal ruin are their self-wrought calamities. **Stumble**—A better reading is, **stumble,** *being disobedient to the word.* **Appointed**—Surely not to the sin, but to the consequence of voluntary disobedience. God has laid down as a law that the wilful rejecter of Jesus and his doctrine shall perish.

II. THE HIGH CALLING, DIGNITY, AND DUTIES OF THE NEW AND SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, 9–iii, 12.

1. The Christian Israel described, 9, 10.

9. Its character is unfolded in a series of terms originally given to the literal Israel, and entirely applicable to the new and spiritual. **A chosen generation**—Isa. xliii, 20. A race selected out of the world. **A royal priesthood**—"A kingdom of priests." Exod. xix, 6. Every believer is both king and priest. **A holy nation**—Exod. xix, 6. Because called by a holy God. **A peculiar people**—Deut. vii, 6. A people for a possession, as absolutely God's own. **Show forth**—Publish, by telling out. **Praises**—The infinite perfections, moral excellences, and wonderful grace of God. **Darkness**—The realm of ignorance, sin, and wretchedness. **Light**—The realm of knowledge of God and Christ, of holiness and bliss. They who have obeyed the gracious call, and made the blessed transition, are prepared to proclaim its glories to the world; and for this purpose are they thus separated to God.

10. This citation of Hosea ii, 23, slightly changed, is applicable alike to the recovery of apostate Jews in the prophet's time, and the conversion to Christ of Jews and Gentiles.

2. The conduct becoming among the heathen, 11, 12.

11. Though a royal race, they are **strangers,** dwelling in a foreign land, and **pilgrims,** *sojourners,* (the "strangers" of chapter i, 2,) on the earth; and, as such, they should adorn the religion they profess; 1. Negatively, by abstaining from all immorality; and, 2. Positively, by correct behaviour. **Fleshly lusts**—Sensual, licentious desires. Whoever keeps away from these will surely **abstain from** their indulgence. Other things may injure spiritual life, but these wage **war against the soul,** as if drawn up in battle array for its destruction.

12. **Conversation** — Conduct, behaviour, as in chap. i, 18. **Honest**—Good, becoming their holy profession. Justin Martyr says of himself, that he was led to believe the Christians falsely accused, by the apparent impossibility of people who lived so blamelessly being guilty of the unnatural vices imputed to them. So

speak against you as evil doers, [a]they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God [b]in the day of visitation.

13 [c]Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; **14** Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him [d]for the punishment of evil doers, and [e]for the praise of them that do well. **15** For so is the will of God, that [f]with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: **16** [g]As free, and not [6]using *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the [h]servants of God. **17** [i7]Honour all *men*. [k] Love the brotherhood. [l] Fear God. Honour the king.

a Matt. 5. 16; Luke 19. 44.—*b* Matt. 22. 21.—*c* Rom. 13. 1; Titus 3. 1.—*d* Rom. 13. 4.—*e* Rom. 13. 3.—*f* Titus 2. 8.—*g* Gal. 5. 1, 13.

6 Gr. *having*.—*h* 1 Cor. 7. 22.—*i* Rom. 12. 10; Phil. 2. 3.—7 Or, *Esteem*.—*k* Heb. 13. 1.—*l* Prov. 24. 21; Matt. 22. 21; Rom. 13. 7.

St. Peter exhorts these suspected and closely-watched brethren, to live so purely that their very detractors should, upon the closest scrutiny of their **good** behaviour, be led to **glorify God,** giving him praise and honour. **Day of visitation**—Whether in wrath or mercy, is not said; and the phrase is used in both senses. But only the latter fits the word **glorify.** See Luke i, 68, 78; vii, 16; xix, 44; Acts xv, 14. It points to a time of mercy and offers of grace to their convinced and awakened souls, which apostolic faith expected.

3. Subjection to civil authority, 13–17.

13. **Every ordinance** — Rather, *every human institution;* here limited to civil government, which, though of divine authority, is framed, set up, and carried on by men. See notes, Romans xiii, 1–7. **For the Lord's sake**—Not his command, which appears in verse 15; but out of regard to the Lord Jesus, whom you love, and should exalt in the esteem of men, giving no occasion for reproach by disobedience and insubordination. **The king**—Both Jews and Greeks gave this title to the Roman emperor.

14. **Governors** — Presidents, proconsuls, and legates, appointed by the emperor, and **sent** out **by him** into the provinces. **Punishment...praise**—The end and duty of good government.

15. **The will of God**—Namely, this subjection to rulers. **Put to silence**—Literally, *muzzle,* so as to stop their mouths. **Ignorance**—Habitual and general, as Wiesinger says, "having ever its mouth open rather than its eyes." **Foolish men**—With the article, *the* foolish men who slanderously babble about them as **evil doers.**

16. **As free**—Compare St. Paul in Gal. v, 13. **Free,** as being of the royal priesthood, the holy nation, and God's own people, (verse 9,) with the consciousness of superiority to a mere earthly life. But they might not therefore infer a freedom from obligation to obey earthly laws. The Jews were thus misled, claiming to owe allegiance only to God as their King, and stirring up rebellion against the authority of Rome. By a perversion of the true doctrine, this Christian freedom might become a pretext for sedition, and **a cloak** to cover gross wickedness. The Anabaptists in Germany, and the Fifth-monarchy men in England, in Cromwell's time, furnish notable illustrations. **Servants of God**—Free, yet servants; bound to obey God, and therefore to obey those to whom he commands us to **submit** ourselves.

17. **Honour all**—Rendering due regard to every man, whatever his condition; a general injunction to the blamelessness required in verse 12, followed by several specifications. **Love is** due to the whole body of Christian brethren. To **God** belongs **fear,** involving reverence and service. **Honour the king**—Both for his office' sake and because God commands it, even though he be Nero.

18 [m] Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. **19** For this *is* [8] [n] thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. **20** For [o] what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* [9] acceptable with God. **21** For [p] even hereunto were ye called: because [q] Christ also suffered [10] for us, [r] leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: **22** [s] Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: **23** [t] Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but [11] committed [u] *himself* to him that judgeth right-

m Eph. 6. 5; Col. 3. 22; 1 Tim. 6. 1; Titus 2. 9. —8 Or, *thank*, Luke 6. 32. —*n* Matt. 5. 10; Rom. 13. 5; chap. 3. 14.—*o* Chap. 3. 14.—9 Or, *thank*.—*p* Matt. 16. 24; Acts 14. 22; 1 Thess. 3. 3; 2 Tim. 3. 12.—*q* Chap. 3. 18.

10 Some read, *for you*.—*r* John 13. 15; Phil. 2. 5; 1 John 2. 6.—*s* Isa. 53. 9; Luke 23. 41; John 8. 46; 2 Cor. 5. 21; Heb. 4. 15.—*t* Isa. 53. 7; Matt. 27. 39; John 8. 48; Heb. 12. 3.—11 Or, *committed* his cause.—*u* Luke 23. 46.

4. Patience of servants under ill-treatment, 18-25.

Servants, though **free** in Christ, and spiritually ennobled, might not indulge impatience and resentment toward their earthly masters, however tyrannical and brutal they might be.

18. **Servants** — Domestic servants, but perhaps including all grades of service, from slaves to employees. **All fear**—The highest degree of respect and submission; easy to kind and considerate **masters,** but distasteful and difficult to the perverse and morose. Yet the obligation is the same in both cases.

19. **Is thankworthy** — Literally, *grace;* meaning here, the fruit of divine grace. **Conscience**—A consciousness of God's presence and precious comfort filling the soul.

20. **What glory**—Surely no credit is due him who patiently endures deserved punishment for wrong doing; but patient endurance of gross and continued injustice is a lofty virtue. Men may scorn it as craven and pusillanimous; but **with God,** the righteous Judge, who reads the heart and knows the motive, it is an **acceptable** thing. **Buffeted**—Strokes with the fist and boxing of the ears were frequently given to servants and attendants.

21. **Were...called**—To this patient endurance as a result of their call to follow Christ; and him they were **called** to follow whithersoever he might go, whether to the mount of transfiguration, where St. Peter found it good to be, (Matt. xvii, 4,) or to Gethsemane and Calvary. Phil. i, 29. The innocent Christ **also suffered** unjustly, and he **suffered for us,** which, with its other and larger benefits, furnishes a pattern for us to follow. A wonderful change has come upon the spirit of the apostle since his indignant cry at the bare suggestion of his Master's suffering, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this thing shall not be unto thee." Matthew xvi, 22. In no thought does he now more exult, save in that of the glory in which He will be revealed. **For us**—And so not for himself; pointing also to the vicarious character of his sufferings, more fully treated in verse 24. **Example**—Literally, *a writing copy*, set by a master, which his pupils are to imitate. It is a pattern of both personal innocence and patient submission.

22. The constant, unvarying innocency of Christ, in both act and word, predicted in Isa. liii, 9, is testified to by his chosen apostle, who speaks of his own knowledge in almost the exact words of the prophet.

23. His patience next appears. **Reviled**—Mocked, slandered, insulted, blasphemed. Yet for it all he had no reviling retort. Repeatedly, indeed, did he speak with severity, but never in revenge. **Suffered**—Spit upon, smitten, buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified, killed. **Threatened not**—Though he had power to destroy on the spot. **Committed**—Most commentators say *himself*, with

eously: **24** [v] Who his own self bare our sins in his own body [1] on the tree, [w] that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: [x] by whose stripes ye were healed. **25** For [y] ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned [z] unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

v Isaiah 53. 4; Matthew 8. 17; Hebrews 9. 28. —1 Or, *to.*—w Romans 6. 2, 11; 7. 6.—x Isa. 53. 5.—y Isaiah 53. 6; Ezekiel 34. 6.—z Ezekiel 34. 23; John 10. 11; Hebrews 13. 20; chapter 5. 4. —a 1 Corinthians 14. 34; Ephesians 5. 22; Colossians 3. 18; Titus 2. 5.

CHAPTER III.

LIKEWISE, [a] ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands;

our version; or *his cause*, with the margin; or *his judgment*, as Steiger; but a better answer, with Huther and Wiesinger, is the *revilings* and *sufferings*. These he turned over to Him that **judgeth** justly, and will properly reward those who inflicted them.

24. **Who...bare our sins**—The **for us**, of verse 21, is now taken up, and it is further shown that our Lord's sufferings **were** endured **for us** who have deserved to suffer, thus exalting both his character of well-doing and the example he has left us. **Our sins**—As acts of the sinner, they cannot be taken away except by preventing them before they exist; nor can they be assumed by, or transferred to, another; nor yet again will any moral effect flowing to us from Christ's death, blot them from existence. Considered in relation to God's law, they are transgressions, blameworthy, and drawing punishment after them. In taking upon himself the act of another, one assumes, not the act itself, nor the character of its performer, but the responsibilities and penalties which flow from it. So Christ took upon himself our sins. **Bare**—Rather, *bore up*, that is, on the cross. He took on himself the burden of our sins, a crushing load, truly, and as our substitute bore their punishment **in his own body**, thus expiating our guilt. See Isa. liii, 4, 12. **On the tree**—One can hardly doubt that the apostle added these words from a recollection of Deut. xxi, 23, and perhaps of St. Paul's use of it in Gal. iii, 13: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." God's curse was upon sin, and Christ, our voluntary substitute, taking our sins **on the tree**, placed himself where the curse, with its heaviest strokes, fell upon him. The purpose of this great suffering was, that they for whom it was endured might be enabled to lead a holy life. **Being dead**—Rather, *having died;* being through the atonement delivered from their power. **Righteousness**—The new master, whom through the Holy Spirit it becomes possible to serve. **By whose stripes**—See Isa. liii, 5. The word here means the *wale* caused by the stripe. Thus these maltreated Christian servants see in their Saviour and Lord all that was endured by any of their class; the buffetings, the cross, as a mode of punishment for slaves, and the stripes, so frequently bestowed, but with the wide difference that his **stripes** were for the healing of their own wounds.

25. **Going astray**—Rather, *Ye were straying like sheep.* See Isa. liii, 6. A stray sheep, lost in the wilderness or mountains, without pasture or protection, and exposed to wild beasts and destruction, figures forth the wretched condition of men **astray** from God and holiness. Such had been the condition of these servants: but **now** they were **returned**, and had found Christ a Physician to heal them, a **Shepherd** to lead and feed them, and the **Bishop**, the watchful overseer, caring for their **souls** as a shepherd cares for the sheep.

CHAPTER III.

5. Duties of wives, 1-6, and husbands, 7.

1. **Likewise**—On the principle laid down in chapter ii, 18. **Ye wives**—The same precept is found in Eph. v, 22, 24, and Col. ii, 28, yet not with the reason here assigned. That the husband does not **obey**...**the word** of the gospel, constitutes no exception to the rule of **subjection**, but is rather a

that, if any obey not the word, [b] they also may without the word [c] be won by the conversation of the wives; **2** [d] While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. **3** [e] Whose adorning, let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; **4** But *let it be* [f] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. **5** For after this manner in the old time [g] the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: **6** Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, [h] calling him lord: whose [1] daughters ye are, as long as ye do well,

[b] 1 Cor. 7. 16.—[c] Matt. 18. 15; 1 Cor. 9. 19-22.—[d] Chap. 2. 12.—[e] 1 Tim. 2. 9; Titus 2. 3, &c.—[f] Psa. 45. 13; Rom. 2. 29; 7. 22; 2 Cor. 4. 16.

[g] Prov. 31. 10, 30; Luke 8. 2, 3; Acts 1. 14 & 9. 36; Titus 2. 3, 4.—[h] Gen. 18. 12.—[1] Greek, *children*.

special ground of its obligation, in order that he may be **won** to Christ by the powerful argument of the wife's holy and obedient conduct. **Without the word**—Not, as Alford, the wives' **word**, in preaching to or exhorting them, but, as before in the verse, **the word** of the gospel, the preached **word**, which had not yet won them to faith in Christ.

2. **While they behold** — Closely observe and scrutinize. **Chaste conversation**—Modest, pure, and holy behaviour. **With fear** — With a spirit of reverence toward their husbands. Such conduct would evince that the religion which induced and sweetened such a life must be divine.

3. **Whose adorning** — The same principle is now extended to the ornamentation of the person; and though **wives** are directly addressed, the precept has a general application. Three specifications of the **outward** are mentioned, in which the real **adorning** should not be sought, and that not in forbidding, except as instruments of vanity, and as things in which they prided themselves. It is not said that gold should not be worn; but that the true adornment does *not consist in that*, but in something higher and better. **Plaiting the hair**—Braiding and wearing it in knots, and variously intertwining it. Ancient medals and sculptures exhibit excesses of this kind, and other ancient writers than Christian describe them. **Wearing of gold**—Golden ornaments, particularly such as are *put round* the head, neck, arm, leg, or finger. **Putting on of apparel**—For the gratification of pride and vanity.

4. **The hidden man of the heart** —This is the true **adorning,** which should be most eagerly sought and highly prized, and to which all other should be subordinate. It is further described as consisting **in** the ornament **of a meek and quiet spirit,** which is **not corruptible,** as gold, apparel, and even the body itself are. Such an ornament is not possible for her who lives only for the world and display. In God's sight, who looks upon the inward, not the outward, it is very precious.

5, 6. **The holy women**—Particularly the wives of the patriarchs. **Trusted in God** — Better, *hoped in God;* believing and serving him, and looking for the fulfilment of his promises. They are adduced as illustrations of the adorning with gentleness and calmness of spirit, which was especially manifested in the matter of **subjection** to **their husbands.** Notably, **Sarah,** the Princess and Mother of nations. (Gen. xvii, 15, 16,) showed it in her obedience to Abraham, indicated in her **calling him lord.** Gen. xviii, 12. So considerate Greek and Roman wives used the equivalent κυριος and *dominus.* **Whose daughters ye are**—Literally, *whose children ye become,* in possessing her spirit. **As long as**—Setting forth two points of resemblance of the **daughters** to the mother. **Do well**—Like her, hoping in God, as one of the holy women. **Not...amazement**—Literally, *fearing no fear.* Commentators, ancient and modern, have been

and are not afraid with any amazement. **7** [i] Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, [k] as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; [l] that your prayers be not hindered.

8 Finally, [m] *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another; [n 2] love as brethren, [o] *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: **9** [p] Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, [q] that ye should inherit a blessing.

i 1 Cor. 7. 3; Eph. 5. 25; Col. 3. 19.—*k* 1 Cor. 12. 23; 1 Thess. 4. 4.—*l* Job 42. 8; Matt. 5. 23; 18. 19.—*m* Rom. 12. 16; 15. 5; Phil. 3. 16.—*n* Rom. 12. 10; Heb. 13. 1; chap. 2. 17.

2 Or, *loving to the brethren.*—*o* Eph. 4. 32; Col. 3. 12.—*p* Prov. 17. 13; 20. 22; Matt. 5. 39; Rom. 12. 14, 17; 1 Cor. 4. 12; 1 Thess. 5. 15.—*q* Matt. 25. 34.

sorely perplexed by this difficult clause. The word πτόησιν signifies *fear, terror, trepidation,* and may refer to either the emotion or its external cause. The meaning is to be found in the spirit of Sarah's obedience, the second point of the daughters' resemblance to her, which the apostle is inculcating as the true ornament. It is the calm, undisturbed, tranquil spirit, and not a slavish one; loving and trustful, and **not afraid** of the husband as an object of *terror* or *apprehension.*

7. **Ye husbands**—A correspondent command is now laid upon the husband, requiring for the wife considerate and Christian treatment as his spiritual equal, although physically weaker than he. **Dwell with**—The word means, primarily, a living together in the same house, and here in the marriage relation. **According to knowledge**—Wisely, reasonably, and not arbitrarily, as lording it over them. **Giving honour**—Reverent regard and respectful treatment. **Weaker vessel**—More delicate and fragile in structure, and therefore demanding the greater consideration. The bottom idea in the word **vessel** is, *a work;* it then comes to include the human body as a piece of God's workmanship. Man is a *weak* **vessel,** and easily damaged; woman is a **weaker** one. Her mental or moral strength is not referred to. **Heirs together**—An additional and higher reason for **honour** to the wife. We prefer the pointing of Tischendorf and Alford, which gives the rendering: *Dwell according to knowledge with the wife as with the weaker vessel, giving honour as to those who are* (not only your wives, but) *also fellow heirs* (with you) *of the grace of life.* Thus reading, the apostle enjoins (1.) Considerateness for the wife, because of her comparative physical weakness; and, (2.) Honour for her because she is an heir with her husband to the gift of life. **Not hindered**—Only on the ground thus laid down can there be union in the prayers of husband and wife. Disagreements, disrespect, and the ill feelings thence resulting, are destructive to united prayer, and, indeed, to all prayer.

6. General Counsels, 8-12.

8. **Finally**—Not as if closing the epistle, but presenting a few things *summarily.* **One mind**—Of the same sentiment and affection. **Having compassion**—Sympathizing with, whether in sorrow or joy. **Love as brethren**—Literally, *brotherly-loving.* **Pitiful**—Tender-hearted, compassionate. **Courteous**—Benignant, kind. But the best ancient MSS. and Versions read *humble-minded.*

9. With such habits of soul, acts contrary to them, as those next named, are easily avoided. Neither the **evil** deed nor the **railing** word must be retaliated. See chap. ii, 23, in the example of Christ. **Blessing**—This word is not a noun. The apostle means **blessing** them who injure and revile us. So taught our Lord. Luke vi, 28. **Thereunto**—The **blessing** of enemies. **Inherit**—In the day of judgment. See our notes on Matthew xxv, 34.

10. 11. The counsels just given are fortified by a citation from Psa. xxxiv, 15-17, nearly verbatim, from the Sep-

10 For [r]he that will love life, and see good days, [s]let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: **11** Let him [t]eschew evil, and do good; [u]let him seek peace, and ensue it. **12** For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, [v]and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* [3]against them that do evil.

13 [w]And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? **14** [x]But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye:* and [y]be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 But sanctify the Lord God

r Psalm 34. 12.—s James 1. 26; chapter 2. 1, 22.—t Psalm 37. 27; Isaiah 1. 16; 3 John 11.—u Romans 12. 18; 14. 19; Hebrews 12. 14.—v John 9. 31; James 5. 16.

3 Greek, *upon.*—w Proverbs 16. 7; Romans 8. 28.—x Matthew 5. 10, 11, 12; James 1. 12; chapter 2. 19; 4. 14.—y Isaiah 8. 12, 13; Jeremiah 1. 8; John 14. 27.

tuagint. **He...love life**—He that loves to live, and resolves to make his life happy and prosperous, must heed these rules: (1.) **Refrain** from insolent, slanderous, false, and deceitful speech; (2.) Abstain from action that is wicked or injurious to others; (3.) Do the **good** and right thing; (4.) **Seek** peaceful relations with all men, and strenuously endeavour to secure them.

12. **For**—Besides the natural tendency of this course, God watches over such persons with open, observant **eyes,** and **his ears** are turned toward **their prayers,** as though he were careful to lose no word or sigh. On the other hand, his **face,** much more than his **eyes,** is upon (ἐπὶ in both cases) evil doers, so that while he will surely bless and defend **the righteous,** it is his fixed, unalterable purpose to punish the wicked. This, which is fully expressed in the Psalm, is here left to be inferred from the difference in God's treatment of different characters.

III. The bearing proper for Christians under persecution, 13–v, 14.

1. The blessedness of sufferers for righteousness, 13, 14.

13. **Who...harm you**—The general experience of the world is, that good and benevolent men need anticipate no injury from the malice and violence of the wicked. "Justice," says Plato, "causes concord and friendship." Yet there are exceptions, as the next verse allows and experience proves. The word *μιμηταὶ, imitators,* is used in six other places in the New Testament, and in every instance is connected with a *person* who is to be followed, or imitated. It should be so here; and we would then read, *if ye be imitators of him that is good,* namely, of the Lord Jesus Christ. The authority, however, is strong for *ζηλωταὶ, zealots,* which Tregelles, Alford, and Wordsworth adopt.

14. **Suffer for righteousness' sake**—St. Peter drops the **harm** for the milder **suffer,** which, in the case supposed, is a blessing rather than an injury. The probable reference is to anticipated persecutions by authority of the magistrates. These were part of the inheritance on earth. Mark x, 30. **Happy**—The Greek is the *blessed* of our Lord's beatitudes, the eighth of which is clearly alluded to. Matt. v, 10. In the dungeon and in the flame they would be **happy,** or, which is more and higher, *blessed,* in their innocence, in their Lord's approval, and in the reward of eternal joy. **Terror**—Used objectively, and pointing to attempts by threats to frighten them into apostasy. **Neither be troubled**—Be agitated by no fears or apprehensions.

15. **The Lord God**—The proper object of fear, as opposed to **terror.** The passage is from Isa. viii, 12, 13. Tregelles, Tischendorf, Alford, and Wordsworth read *Christ* for **God,** the last two translating "sanctify Christ *as* the Lord." But it is rather Christ *who is* the Lord, **the Lord** *Christ* whom they are instructed to **sanctify.** Enthrone him **in your hearts** for life and for death; and in alarm and danger he shall keep you in quietness and

in your hearts: And [z]*be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and [4]fear: **16** [a]Having a good conscience; [b]that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing. **18** For Christ also hath [c]once suffered for sins, the just for the un-

z Psalm 119. 46; Acts 4. 8; Colossians 4. 6; 2 Timothy 2. 25.——4 Or, *reverence.*

a Hebrews 13. 18.——b Titus 2. 8; chapter 2. 12.
c Romans 5. 6; Hebrews 9. 26; chapter 2. 21; 4. 1.

rest. The passage is proof of the Godhead of Christ.

2. Readiness for a suitable defence of their faith, 15, 16.

Be ready—For an account to men, while thus having supreme regard for Christ. **Always**—No exception as to time. **An answer**—*An apology*, in the old sense of a defence of what is true, with a refutation of objections. St. Paul's speech before Agrippa (Acts xxvi) is a masterly specimen. **Every ... asketh**—Honest inquirers should receive instruction; cavillers and revilers are entitled only to silence. Matt. vii, 6; xxvii, 12. But probably magistrates are especially meant. **A reason**—An intelligent, rational account. The Romish response of "I believe because the Church believes," is thus repudiated beforehand. **Of the hope**—That is, of eternal glory, involving the basis of truth in fact and doctrine, upon which it rests. The **answer** thus became a defence of Christianity itself, seldom, indeed, with the learning and power of a St. Paul, a Justin Martyr, or a Tertullian, but always with intelligence and reason. **Meekness**—With clearness and firmness, *but* (so the oldest MSS. read) with modesty in speech and bearing, and not with insolence or arrogance. **Fear**—Due respect to the interrogator.

16. **A good conscience**—A consciousness of rectitude. The correct life agreeing with the spoken defence would powerfully tend to make all calumniators **ashamed. In Christ**—St. Peter's idea of **good** conduct is far higher than a mere worldly, dead morality. It centres in Christ; and in personal union by faith with him the believer lives, walks, and acts.

3. The excellence of suffering innocently stated, and illustrated in the suffering and triumph of Christ, 17-22.

17. **Better**—It is infinitely preferable that, if suffering befalls, as it most likely will, it be on account of a godly life rather than for crime. This is an axiom in Christian ethics. **If the will**—Literally, *if the will of God should will*, (the former being the will itself, the latter the will acting,) that is, for high reasons, for the sake of either themselves or his cause, to place them where suffering would ensue.

18. **Christ also**—As well as yourselves. **Once**—Once for all; perhaps also intimating that their suffering might be in like manner, **once**, or at least that soon they would look back upon it in that light. **Suffered**—On the cross, freely, voluntarily, doing the will of God, and for no fault of his own. **For sins**—On account of, or in relation to, sins, that is, in expiation of them. The preposition *περι*, *for*, radically signifies *around*, in the relation of circumference to centre, the action being from above. (See Curtius, 466, 5.) It represents Christ throwing himself down upon and around **sins** in such a manner that the falling curse of the broken law would surely strike him. In the Septuagint, *περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν* is used more than sixty times to represent sin-offerings. Its use here shows that Christ made atonement for sins, by suffering *in the stead* of those for whom he offered himself a sacrifice **The just**—Rather, *A just person for unjust persons;* one righteous man for a world of the unrighteous. The terms **just** and **unjust** express a relation to law, and are exact opposites. Christ, the innocent and guiltless, died as a

just, that he might bring us to

d 2 Corinthians 13. 4.

condemned criminal in the stead of the wicked and guilty. The preposition ὑπὲρ, here rendered *for*, is used to represent a bending *over* one to protect, defend, and avert injury. (Winer, 47, 5, 1.) Christ did this by letting the injury fall upon himself, interposing between the stroke of justice and the sinner, and receiving in his own person, in the stead of the guilty, a suffering on account of sin. This, surely, was most blessed suffering in **well doing**; and his followers may well take courage to suffer patiently in his cause. But a still more glorious view is presented, showing the intent of this suffering. **That he might bring us to God**—Does this mean that he might bring us, after the final judgment, together with himself into heaven? Or, that he might bring us into a state of reconciliation and communion with God in this world? Dean Alford, quoting Bengel, adopts the former view, as though it were the only possible one; and it evidently accords with his interpretation of what follows. It is true that Christ will bring all saved souls to heaven; but it does not seem to be taught here. We prefer the second view, as bringing the death of Christ into close connexion with its results, as in chap. i, 3, 21; ii, 24; Col. i, 21, and elsewhere. It also precisely accords with the use of the noun προσαγωγή, *access*, in Rom. v, 2; Eph. ii, 18; iii, 12; and, further, sustains the parallel in chap. ii, 21. Indeed, it is what our Lord said, (John xii, 32,) that if he were lifted up he would draw all unto himself. **Being put to death**—Aorist: *Having been put to death.* The participles θανατωθεὶς and ζωοποιηθεὶς are connected with **bring us to God**, as explanatory of the means whereby we, **unjust**, alienated, and afar off, are brought into peace with him. Besides the antithesis between them, there is another between σαρκὶ and πνευματί. The clause literally reads, *put to death indeed in flesh, but quickened in*, or by, *spirit.* As to **put to death**, there is

God, [d] being put to death [e] in the

e Colossians 1. 21, 22.

no difficulty. **Flesh**—If this word means Christ's *body*, then **spirit** must mean his *human spirit*, which, as we shall see, the word **quickened** will not allow; yet the assumption that as only the body died, σαρξ must perforce signify *body*, has led to the wildest vagaries in both interpretation and theology. The word is a common one to designate our Lord's entire humanity, embracing both body and soul. "The Word was made *flesh*." John i, 14. "Of his loins according to the *flesh*." Acts ii, 30. "Of the seed of David according to the *flesh*." Rom. i, 3. "In the likeness of sinful *flesh*." Rom. viii, 3. "God was manifest in the *flesh*." 1 Tim. iii, 16. "Jesus Christ is come in the *flesh*." 2 John 7. Compare John xvii, 2; Acts ii, 17; Romans iii, 20; Ephesians ii, 15; 1 Peter i, 24; 1 John iv, 2, for a similar use of the word. Christ was **put to death** *as a man.* Death dealt with him as with any other man, separating, in the usual way, the soul from the body, and subjecting him to all the conditions of dying. No reason appears, therefore, for a specific statement that he died in his *body*, leaving as true in his special case the universal fact that the spirit did not die. The meaning, then, is, he was **put to death in** *his human nature.* **Quickened**—The word so translated is used in eleven other places in the New Testament. In seven, John v, 21, (twice;) Romans iv, 17; viii, 11; 1 Cor. xv, 22, 36, 45, it refers to the resurrection of the dead; in three, John vi, 63; 2 Cor. iii, 6; Gal. iii, 21, to giving spiritual life; and once, 1 Tim. vi, 13, to God as the life-giver. In every case it means *to make alive*, to give life where it before had ceased to be, or had not been, which, indeed, is the exact signification of the word. Those expositors who understand by πνεῦμα the human spirit, are compelled here to invent new definitions for this word. Some, like Steiger and Bloomfield, understand *preserved alive*, which the word never means; and which would only make St. Peter

flesh, but [f] quickened by the Spirit:

[f] Romans 1. 4;

19 By which also he went and

Romans 8. 11.

record a fact common to all who die, as a singular phenomenon in the case of Christ. Wordsworth says, "His human spirit, being liberated by death from the burden of the flesh, acquired *new life by death;* it gained new powers of motion," etc. This is undoubtedly true, and no less universally true of all souls on their escape from the body; but the word never means an *increase of life* where life already exists. Alford correctly insists that the word means "brought to life;" but he explains, Christ "ceased to live a fleshly mortal life, began to live a spiritual resurrection life," which, true enough as to the first half, has no foundation in fact for the second half until the morning of the third day. The plain and necessary meaning of **quickened** is, that something pertaining to our Lord, which had once lived, was *restored to life*, or that something that had never lived was *brought into being* and connected with him. Of the latter we have no intimation, and the former was realized in his resurrection from the dead. Any other meaning destroys the antithesis. **The Spirit**—This refers (1) to our Lord's human spirit, (2) to the Holy Spirit, or (3) to his divine nature. As to the first, the human spirit of Christ had not died; it, therefore, was not *made alive.* Doubtless on its emancipation from the body by death it became more free and untrammelled; but neither this nor any supposed change in the mode or sphere of its existence fulfils the condition required in *made alive.* It follows that **spirit** is not the *object* of the participle **quickened.** Nor had Christ's human spirit any power to raise him from the dead, which, as we have seen, **quickened** signifies. (2.) It would not be dogmatically erroneous to understand the word of the Holy Spirit, although no express passage ascribes the resurrection of Christ to him. For, though God raised him from the dead, it is a well-known truth that God's works are wrought by the Holy Ghost; and we are taught that Christ "cast out devils by the Spirit of God," (Matt. xii, 28;) gave "commandments unto the apostles through the Holy Ghost," (Acts i, 2;) and by his Spirit inspired the prophets, chap. i, 11. But, (3,) we prefer to understand Christ's *divine nature*, partly because it fills out the contrast, and partly because whatever is done by the Holy Spirit is in reality his work. Thus he will raise believers at the last day, (John vi, 40, 44, 54;) but St. Paul teaches that it will be done by the indwelling Holy Spirit in them. Rom. viii, 11. This rounds out the double antithesis: *put to death indeed as to his human nature, but made alive by his divine nature.* It is urged, (as in Lange,) as a grammatical objection to this view, that the two datives are evidently parallel, and must have the same sense. The reply is, that this is a begging of the whole question that compels **quickened** to take a meaning which it never has; and that the true rule is, that the force of the datives is fixed by the meaning of the two participles. The resurrection is referred to again in verse 21, but in another connexion and for another purpose, namely, to show how baptism saves; and, besides, it is too remote for the present inquiry as to *how* the suffering of Christ brings **us to God.** Our Lord was **put to death,** and thus made atonement, but his dying simply expiated sin. As God-man he was *dead;* and, though his human soul still lived in union with his divine nature, while held in the bonds of death he was powerless to apply the benefits of his dying. By his resurrection he became "Lord both of the dead and living," (Rom. xiv, 9,) and won that power. An exact parallel is, "Was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. iv. 25. Thus St. Peter and St. Paul agree.

19. **By which**—Better, *In which*, namely, his pre-existent divine nature. **He went** — Literally, *having gone.* Alford supposes local transference and personal preaching; but the case

[f] preached unto the spirits [h] in prison; **20** Which sometime were

[g] Chap. 1. 12; 4. 6.

[h] Isaiah 42. 7; 49. 9; 61. 1.

is parallelled in Eph. ii, 17, "And came [by the Holy Spirit] and preached [through the apostles] peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." So Christ **went** by the Holy Spirit, and **preached,** through Noah, to the antediluvians. He is the Jehovah who sent his Spirit to do his office of awaking to repentance the ungodly of that generation, (Gen. vi, 3,) and to speak through Noah. **Preached**—This is not *εὐαγγελίζω*, the ordinary word for preaching the gospel, but *κηρύσσω, to proclaim as a herald, to publish*, to *announce*, to *preach*. It is used sixty times in the New Testament, and in every instance what is preached or published must be sought in the context. It never, in itself, means to preach the gospel. **The spirits in prison**—The disembodied spirits of men who had been **disobedient...in the days of Noah,** and were in **prison** at the time when St. Peter wrote. The object is to identify the men to whom Christ preached; and they are spoken of as they were at the time, not of the preaching, but of this identification. The word **prison** is always used in a bad sense, and denotes the department of hades in which the wicked are shut up, 2 Pet. ii, 4; Jude 6; Rev. xx, 7. To these persons, when on the earth, Noah, "a preacher of righteousness," (2 Pet. ii, 5,) under the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ, preached the law of repentance and godly living for a hundred and twenty years, and preached in vain. That the apostle never dreamed of them as enjoying in their **prison** a second day of grace, is plain from his mention of them as, like the fallen angels, a specimen of those who are *reserved* (guarded in prison) *unto the day of judgment*, and a proof as well of the certain perdition of the ungodly, 2 Pet. ii, 4–9. The purpose of this digression was to show that the Christ who suffered and rose again, strove, in the earlier ages of the world, to **bring** men **to God,** as well as in the days of his passion; and, perhaps, also, as Wordsworth suggests, to confute the notion of certain heretics that the God of the Old Testament was less merciful than the God of the New.

This passage has received very various interpretations, from Augustine downward; but the weight of interpretation seems to accord with that above given. The descent into hell, with its object, some have thought they found here; and the theories thence resulting very widely differ. Some hold that Christ entered paradise and triumphantly announced his completed redemption; others add to this, the release of the Old Testament saints; some hold that he went to Tartarus as conqueror and judge, denouncing condemnation upon the ungodly there confined; others, that, as redeemer and judge, he preached to both the good and the bad; and others still, as Alford, Fronmüller in Lange, and Wordsworth, that he preached the gospel of salvation to the ungodly antediluvians; the last insisting that it was a unique case, and not repeated or continued, and the first, that it is continued to others who die impenitent.

Upon this we remark: 1. That Christ "descended into hell," (hades,) though not directly asserted in this passage, nor other scripture, appears plainly from the use of Psa. xvi, 10 by St. Peter in Acts ii, 27–31. That his human soul, released from its connexion with the body by death, entered the world of departed spirits, as do the souls of all men, and was subject to all the laws and conditions of that world until the third morning, is a true doctrine. But let it not be made to carry what does not belong to it. The one important point in it is, that the soul of Christ did not *remain* in that world, but on the third day came forth for the resurrection. Yet, be it remembered, our Lord was in paradise, the blessed side of hades, whither the penitent thief accompanied him, as was promised on the cross.

2. Of Christ's employment in that world we have no intimation, unless

in the present passage, which our interpretation, necessitated by the force of the word **quickened,** forbids. He entered that world as do other men, with the humble, prayerful cry upon his lips, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," (Luke xxiii, 46,) and with the limitations of a man, as he had passed his whole earthly life. That saints and angels welcomed him as personally, though not yet officially, victorious, and that he partook of a higher bliss than when on earth, we can well believe. But not even his human soul could bridge over the awful, impassable gulf between paradise and the prison-house of hades, of which Father Abraham said to the rich man, "They which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Luke xvi, 26. This is one of the inexorable laws of the realm of the dead, which some of the above-mentioned theories forget when they imagine Christ's human spirit crossing to preach to the lost, or the lost accepting salvation and passing the "great gulf" into paradise, which our Lord himself, in the words cited, declares *impossible.*

3. If Christ, in person, preached in hades to the antediluvians there imprisoned, by the well-known law, *exceptio probat regulam — the exception proves the rule*—the specification of the persons to whom he preached, namely, the disobedient of Noah's time, excludes all others from the message. This view suggests at once most serious difficulties. Why preach to the antediluvians of Noah's time, whom St. Peter classes with fallen angels and Sodomites, reserved unto judgment, (2 Pet. ii, 4–9,) and not to all antediluvians? and, indeed, why to antediluvians alone, and not to all who have died disobedient? How should the selection be so effected as to exclude others from the hearing? What was the nature of the proclamation? Was it a message of wrath or of mercy? If salvation was offered, why to those particular sinners who had so persistently sinned against light and long-suffering, to the exclusion of all other sinners? And what would be the judgment of those excluded upon the partial goodness which made so limited an offer? These are pertinent questions that should be answered before the theory is accepted.

4. These representations of Christ entering the world of spirits as a triumphant conqueror, and there doing the work of judge and saviour, overlook the important fact that he was still in his state of humiliation. "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. ii, 8. He had voluntarily gone down to the lowest depths of self-humiliation in his death on the cross, and there he remained until the moment of his resurrection, the beginning of his exaltation. Death was conqueror, and still held him in its grasp. The shame of the cross was upon him. The curse which he took upon himself had crushed him in the sight of the universe; and he still lay under it where he fell. The atonement, in itself, was complete in his dying; but, however exultingly the wonderful story, soon to be made glorious, might be told in paradise, its application, and the proclamation of it as an accomplished and valid fact, required the precedent deliverance from the curse by the resurrection. Only so, as it seems to us, was the "all power" (Matt. xxviii, 18) won to authoritatively condemn as judge, or to offer mercy as redeemer. Then, indeed, was he Conqueror and Lord; and with an authority to be gainsaid by none, his salvation could thenceforth be preached. Some, indeed, hold that his preaching in hades was *after* his resurrection; but not even that view can remove the difficulties, nor can it be gathered from this passage.

5. The doctrine here dissented from is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, which confines its offers of salvation to the present life, and connects the decisions of the final judgment with the characters and acts of men as they are in this world, and not as they

disobedient, [i] when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while [k] the ark was a preparing, [l] wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.
21 [m] The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of [n] the filth of the flesh, [o] but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) [p] by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:
22 Who is gone into heaven, and [q] is on the right hand of God; [r] angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

CHAPTER IV.

FORASMUCH then [a] as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for [b] he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from

i Gen. 6. 3, 5, 13. — *k* Heb. 11. 7. — *l* Gen. 7. 7; 8. 18; 2 Pet. 2. 5. — *m* Eph. 5. 26. — *n* Titus 3. 5. — *o* Rom. 10. 10. — *p* Chap. 1. 3. — *q* Psa. 110. 1; Rom. 8. 34; Eph. 1. 20; Col. 3. 1; Heb. 1 3. — *r* Rom. 8. 38; 1 Cor. 15. 24; Eph. 1. 21. — *a* Chap. 3. 18. — *b* Gal. 5. 24; Col. 3. 3, 5.

may be formed after death. See Matt. vii, 21–23; x, 32, 33; xxv, 31–46; Mark viii, 38; Luke xvi, 25, 26; Rom. ii, 6; 2 Cor. v, 10; Heb. ix, 27; Rev. ii, 10. An interpretation which is at war with the analogy of faith cannot be safe or true.

20. **Disobedient**—They disbelieved the preaching of Noah, and disobeyed his calls to repentance. **Waited**—Literally, *was waiting;* and it continued to wait for their repenting through a hundred and twenty years, when the end came. **Few**—Only **eight;** very **few** compared with the vast number that might have escaped. **Were saved**—From destruction by the flood, **by** means of the **water** which bore up the ark.

21. **The like figure whereunto**—Better, *Which, in its antitype.* The **water** of the flood is the type, the thing prefiguring; the water which becomes **baptism** is the antitype, the thing prefigured. Noah, believing and obeying, (Heb. xi, 7,) was **saved** by the type; **us,** believing and obeying, **baptism,** the antitype, is **now** saving. But the apostle is careful to assure us that baptism saves, not by a mere external application of water in cleansing the body, **not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,** but symbolically, representing the cleansing of the soul. "Baptismal regeneration," therefore, can be only a symbolical regeneration. **The answer**—The response of the soul consecrating itself to God, and earnestly seeking **toward** him for salvation. The word means both *inquiry* and *answer,* and is used for the *examination* of candidates for baptism. The following is a very early formula: "Dost thou separate thyself from Satan?" "I separate myself." "Dost thou devote thyself to Christ?" "I devote myself." The **answer** then would be (see Bloomfield) the promise to live righteously and holily, so as to have a **conscience** void of offence **toward God.** This is the literal "regeneration." **By the resurrection** — The risen **Christ,** with the Holy Spirit, baptizes and saves spiritually and really, and gives efficiency to baptism with water to save symbolically.

22. **Gone into heaven**—At his ascension, to take his place as crowned King, to send the Holy Spirit, and to exercise kingly power in bringing men to God. **The right hand**—The place of highest honour, to which God exalted him. See notes on Acts xii, 55, and Rom. viii, 34. **Made subject** — To him, the glorified God-man, as supreme Lord. Whether, as Steiger considers, the **authorities** be *reigning* authorities, and the **powers** *acting* powers, we know not. But see notes on Rom. viii, 38; Eph. i, 21; and Col. ii, 15.

CHAPTER IV.

4. Christ's example, also, of holiness to be followed, 1-6.

1. **Christ hath suffered**—Chapter iii, 18. **Arm yourselves**—As a soldier called to a warfare. **The same mind**—The same thought and purpose of suffering innocently and in God's cause, that Christ manifested. **For**—Some understand this clause, of the believer's identification with Christ

sin; **2** [c] That he no longer [d] should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, [e] but to the will of God. **3** [f] For the time past of *our* life may suffice us [g] to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: **4** Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, [h] speaking evil of *you:* **5** Who shall give account to him that is ready [i] to judge the quick and the dead. **6** For, for this cause [k] was the gos-

[c] Romans 14. 7.—[d] Galatians 2. 20; chapter 1. 14.—[e] John 1. 13; Romans 6. 11; 2 Corinthians 5. 15; James 1. 18.—[f] Ezekiel 44. 6; Acts 17. 30.

[g] Eph. 2. 2; 4. 17; 1 Thess. 4. 5; Titus 3. 3; chap. 1. 14.—[h] Acts 13. 45; 18. 6; chap. 3. 16.—[i] Acts 10. 42; 17. 31; Rom. 14. 10, 12; 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52; 2 Tim. 4. 1; James 5. 9.—[k] Chap. 3. 19.

in his suffering and death, as in Romans vi, 7–11, and Galatians ii, 20. But this is too Pauline for St. Peter's style of expression; and, besides, the words hardly admit of it. Referred to Christ himself, it states, as a fact, the *rest* from sin that followed his suffering, and presents a valid reason for the *arming*, namely, that they, having **the same** purpose, should likewise have no more to do with sin.

2. **That...live**—Rather, *so as no more to live;* this the end in arming. **Lusts of men**—Making, not the base desires of ungodly men their law, but **the will of God**, and his will alone, for the rest of their earthly life.

3. **The will of the Gentiles**—Βούλημα, in contrast with θέλημα, *will of God.* The latter has more of authority, the former is here more expressive of strong *desire*, which **the Gentiles** would persuade Christians to follow again as before conversion. But the apostle tells them, *sufficient is the time past to have wrought* that which they would have you still do, and may try to compel you to do. **When we walked** — The habitual Gentile conduct. The passage shows those addressed, even if Jews, had been liable to Gentile vices. **Lasciviousness** — Unbridled conduct; a general term, with its particulars following. **Lusts** — Sensual impurity. **Excess of wine**—Swillings of wine; beastly drunkenness. **Revellings**—Night carousals; going, after supper, into the streets with torches, frolic, and drunken songs. **Banquetings**—Drinking bouts. **Abominable**—Lawless. All idolatry is against God's law; but in this connexion, doubtless, are included the obscene and filthy practices at many of the idol feasts.

4. **Think it strange**—Are *surprised* at the strange sight of men who are not rushing with them into **the same** *sink of debauchery.* **Speaking evil**—Literally, *blaspheming:* railing at them for their singularity, and slandering them as enemies of society; abusing Christianity for requiring a different life, and reviling the Christ whom they served. It was natural that these heathen should thus vent their vexation; ungodly men sometimes do the same thing now.

5. **Give account**—Since these profligates and revilers must render an **account** to Christ, his maligned and suffering people may safely leave their vindication in his hands, following his own example, chapter ii, 23. **Ready to judge**—The blessed side of Christ's readiness for his second advent, St. Peter sets forth in his speech in Solomon's porch. Acts iii, 19, 20. And he is, on his part, fully prepared to take his seat on the judgment throne, as he has ever been since the apostle wrote. Not the nearness of the event, but its certainty, is intended. **The quick and the dead**—It obviates no difficulty to take these words figuratively. They must, we think, be taken in their usual sense, as in Acts x, 42, Romans xiv, 9, and 2 Timothy iv, 1, meaning those who are *living* when Christ comes, and those who are then **dead.**

6. **For**—That **the dead** are to be judged, is the particular statement, the reason for which is now to be assigned. **For this cause**—In view of

pel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

7 But [l] the end of all things is at hand: [m] be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. **8** [n] And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for [o] charity [l] shall cover the multitude of sins. **9** [p] Use hospitality one to another [q] without grudging. **10** [r] As every

[l] Matt. 24. 13; Rom. 13. 12; Phil. 4. 5; Heb. 10. 25; James 5. 8; 2 Pet. 3. 9; 1 John 2. 18.——[m] Matt. 26. 41; Luke 21. 34; Col. 4. 2; chapter 1. 13.——[n] Col. 3. 14; Heb. 13. 1.

[o] Prov. 10. 12; 1 Cor. 13. 7; James 5. 20.——1 Or, *will*.——[p] Rom. 12. 13; Heb. 13. 2.——[q] 2 Cor. 9. 7; Phil. 2. 14; Philemon 14.——[r] Rom. 12. 6; 1 Cor. 4. 7.

the judgment. We agree with Alford that **dead,** here, is, as in verse 5, the physically dead, and not, as Wordsworth, the "dead in sins;" but he is in error in holding its equal comprehension in both verses. For in verse 5 it is universal; in this verse we are told, (literally,) *it was evangelized to deads*—that is, that part of all **the dead** (note on Luke xx, 35) to whom the gospel was preached, saying nothing of that part to whom it was not preached. We reject the view of Alford and others that the reference is to a preaching of the gospel to men after death, which is nowhere taught in Scripture, and contradicts its whole tenor. The plain meaning is, that **the gospel was preached** to men when living, who are now **dead;** just as it would be perfectly correct to say that it was preached to saints in glory, or to souls that are in perdition; meaning, that it was preached to them when here on the earth. The aorist shows its cessation. We think, moreover, that **judged,** in both verses, must refer to the same judge and the same judgment-day. This sweeps away a whole class of expositions. **Judged according to men**—The gospel is preached to men with reference to, and for the sake of, their living holily, and being prepared for the judgment. They who **are dead** when Christ comes, will be judged **according to men** who are still **in the flesh,** that is, as surely, and upon the same righteous principles, as they will be who are living at his advent. **Live according to God**—A true, spiritual, and holy life in this world, and a life of glory in heaven, even such a life as he requires and gives to all who obey his gospel.

5. The coming end of all things, enforcing this law of holiness, 7-11.

7. **The end of all things**—Absolutely, in the final consummation. To refer this to the destruction of Jerusalem, with Dr. Clarke and others, assumes an unlikely interest in that event on the part of those to whom St. Peter is writing, and furnishes no proper basis for the exhortations which follow. **At hand**—Not in time, but in the apostle's vivid conception of eternal realities. He has himself given us the divine arithmetic by which he reckons, (2 Pet. iii, 8, where see notes;) and the Holy Spirit, under whose inspiration he wrote, well knew that it was not literally near, and did not inspire him to write an untruth. Practically, to every man that **end** is very near, and it becomes us to walk daily with it in view. **Sober**—Self-restrained. **Watch**—So as to have the habit of **prayer.** The three belong together. These counsels are for personal life.

8. As to social relations, first of all stands intense love one for another. See notes on chap. i, 22, 23. **Shall cover**—Rather, *covers*, as with a mantle. **Sins**—Not our own, but those of our brethren; their faults and offences, which love overlooks and forgives, reversing the too human rule of leniency for self and strictness for others. The Romanists vainly hold the apostle as meaning that deeds of benevolence to the poor procure pardon of sin, for, as Luther rightly says, "Faith only can cover sin for thee before God."

9. **Hospitality**—As would often be necessary toward those who might be driven from home, or otherwise suffering. **Without grudging**—Not murmuring at the cost or trouble.

man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, [s] as good stewards of [t] the manifold grace of God. **11** [u] If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; [v] if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth; that [w] God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ: [x] to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning [y] the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: **13** [z] But rejoice, inasmuch as [a] ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; [b] that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceed-

[s] Matt. 24. 45; Luke 12. 42; 1 Cor. 4. 1; Titus 1. 7.——[t] 1 Cor. 12. 4; Eph. 4. 11.——[u] Jer. 23. 22——[v] Rom. 12. 6; 1 Cor. 3. 10.——[w] Eph. 5. 20; chap. 2. 5.

[x] 1 Tim. 6. 16; chap. 5. 11; Rev. 1. 6.——[y] 1 Cor. 3. 13.——[z] Acts 5. 41; James 1. 2.——[a] Rom. 8. 17; 2 Cor. 1. 7; Phil. 3. 10; Col. 1. 24; 2 Tim. 2. 12; chap. 5. 1, 10; Rev. 1. 9.——[b] Chap. 1. 5, 6.

10. So also in the exercise of supernatural gifts, referring to the charisms bestowed upon the primitive Christians, though doubtless including God's gifts of a temporal character. 1 Cor. xii, 4–11, 28. **As good stewards**—Put in trust, for the Lord's gracious purposes, with **the** precious **gift**, to be used for him in doing good to others, and not for one's own personal and selfish ends. The rule is, *according as* **every man hath received**, and applies to the use of our talents, money, influence, and whatever God has given.

11. Now follows a pair of specimens of the gifts just mentioned. **If... speak**—As a teacher, preacher, or exhorter. **Oracles of God**—As communications of God's doctrines, and not the speaker's own. In Rom. iii, 2 the phrase means God's revelations in the Holy Scriptures; and, for us, it has here the same practical import. **Minister**—The reference is not to the deacon distributing church alms, but to any service which one brother might render to another out of his own means. **The ability which God giveth**—This, no more and no less, is the rule for the Church of all ages, and the measure of every man's duty in the kingdom of Christ. Rom. xii, 6–8. The apostle, perhaps, had in mind our Lord's parable of the talents. Matt. xxv, 14–30. **God... glorified**—As he will be by such an entire consecration and employment by **every man** of his **gift** in doing all possible good to the souls and bodies of men. **To whom**—Christ; for to him as Mediator belongs *the glory* of all good gifts bestowed and of their right use, and *the power* that empowers for doing good.

6. Special consideration of the persecution then imminent, with warnings as to the conduct appropriate, 12-19.

Returning to the general subject introduced at chap. iii, 13, the apostle reminds his readers that (1) they should expect to share Christ's glory as well as his sufferings, 12, 13; (2) they should see to it that their sufferings are really for his sake, and not for crime, 14–16; and (3) that they will know but the beginning of God's judgments, the terrible weight of which will fall on the ungodly, 17, 18.

12. **Think it not strange**—Be not *surprised.* The heathen were surprised (verse 4) at the life of Christians, but Christians need not be at persecution by the heathen. **Fiery trial**—The word means a burning, a being on fire, and the trying of metals by fire. It may mean here an actual suffering by fire, though perhaps only some severe trial which would be *as if* by fire. Bloomfield thinks there is an allusion to the *questio*, a torment by fire. **Try you**—See notes on chap. i, 7. The Greek shows that those addressed were then passing through trials, but the whole passage points to an increase in their severity. The Neronian persecution began A. D. 64.

13. **Rejoice**—Habitually. **Partakers of**—In actual bodily **sufferings** for **Christ's** sake, thus identifying them with him. Then, at the time of the revelation of **his glory**, (chap. i, 7, 13,)

ing joy. **14** [c]If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye;* for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: [d]on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. **15** But [e]let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, [f]or as a busybody in other men's matters. **16** Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; [g]but let him glorify God on this behalf. **17** For the time *is come* [h]that judgment must

c Matt. 5. 11; 2 Cor. 12. 10; James 1. 12; chap. 2. 19, 20; 3. 14 —*d* Chap. 2. 12; 3. 16.—*e* Chap. 2. 20.

f 1 Thess. 4. 11; 1 Tim. 5. 13. —*g* Acts 5. 41. —*h* Isa. 10. 12; Jer. 25. 29; 49. 12; Ezra 9. 6; Mal. 3. 5.

in the day of judgment, they will "also reign with him." 2 Tim. ii, 12. **Be glad**—Better, *rejoice.* The first **rejoice** is in sorrow and pain: this is with triumphant exultation.

14. **Reproached**—Railed at and assailed with opprobrious epithets. The apostle doubtless alludes to our Lord's words in Matt. v, 11. **Happy**—Blessed. See notes on chap. iii, 14. **The Spirit**—The Holy Spirit, who rested on Christ, **resteth upon you,** filling your souls with **glory** and the presence of **God.** A blessed compensation truly for the patient endurance of unmerited reproaches. **Evil spoken of**—On the part of the persecutors Christ is *blasphemed;* on the part of the reviled Christians **he is glorified.**

15. Their sufferings must be for **the name of Christ.** To emphasize this, the solemn charge follows to see to it, for the sake of both themselves and the cause, that **none suffer,** bodily or by reproach, for any wicked crime. **An evil doer**—Guilty of misdemeanour. **Busybody... matters**—The admonition is good, taking the ordinary view of it. Robinson defines, *an overseer of other men's matters;* perhaps an indiscreet zealot against heathen manners and customs. But as the apostle is specifying offences against civil law, it seems better, with Lardner and others, to understand it of *political* busybodies, or factious, seditious persons. How faithfully this injunction was heeded by the early Christians may be estimated from the testimony of Pliny's letter to the Emperor Trajan, some forty-five years later. After saying that they were charged with no other crime than the being Christian, he adds: "They affirmed that the whole of their fault or error lay in this—that they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ, as to God, and bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it. When these things were performed it was their custom to separate, and then to come together to a meal which they ate in common."

16. **If... Christian**—The epithet is found in only two other places, Acts xi, 26, xxvi, 28. It seems to have at this time become the common name applied in heathen communities to the followers of Jesus, but always with contempt and scorn. Still, it does not appear to have been adopted among themselves. The apostle exhorts that if any one of them is accused of being **a Christian,** however much it may bite or sting, he be **not ashamed,** as sensitive natures might easily be. Doubtless there were those, as there may be now, who could more bravely be tossed to the lions than endure the taunt. **On this behalf**—Rather, with the best texts, *in this name.* Accept the name, and **glorify God** in wearing it as a badge of the highest honour. Perhaps St. Peter was thinking of his own rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. Acts v, 40, 41.

17. **The time**—The *season,* the fit time, for God's judicial dealings with a wicked and corrupt world. The apostle saw that the times were ripe for the stretching forth of the divine hand in terrible chastenings. **Judgment**—That severe trial which deter-

begin at the house of God: and [i]if *it* first *begin* at us, [k]what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? **18** [l]And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? **19** Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God [m]commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

i Luke 23. 31.—*k* Luke 10. 12, 14.—*l* Prov. 11. 31; Luke 23. 31.—*m* Psa. 31. 5; Luke 23. 46;

minos character through afflictions and distresses, purifying, as in a furnace, those who endure the test, and overwhelming the wicked with destruction. The apostle says, *It is now the season of the beginning* of this work **at the house of God.** The divine rule is to always begin his work of discipline and punishment with his own people. Isa. x, 12, 13; Ezek. ix, 6; Jer. xxv, 29; xlix, 12. **House of God**—The **us** in the next verse, the "spiritual house" of chap. ii, 5, the "Church of the living God" of 1 Tim. iii, 15, and the "whose house are we" of Heb. iii, 6. There appears no special reference to the Jewish temple or to the destruction of Jerusalem. **If it first begin at us**—The sufferings of the righteous proceed from God's judgment, for the purpose of chastening, (Heb. xii, 6;) and they should, therefore, **glorify God** in them; but that judgment does not *end* with them, for it proceeds onward from them to the wicked. If he deal thus with his faithful people who **obey** his **gospel,** how terribly will he deal with them that obey it **not,** and scorn the Christ in whom it commands them to believe? It may be delayed; it may seem to be escaped; they may prosper and attain high honor and power by their iniquity, and die calmly in their beds; but the awful, overwhelming **end** will surely come.

18. **Scarcely be saved**—So severe the persecution, so terrible the trial, so powerful the influences to apostasy, and so weak his own nature, that the Christian will with difficulty endure to the end and **be saved** in heaven; but if he hold to his faith in Christ, his salvation is absolutely certain. **The ungodly and the sinner**—Not two classes, but one; he who is utterly the opposite of God in character and life, and a regardless transgressor of his law, making no effort to **be saved.** The question implies a strong denial that he will be saved at all.

19. **That suffer**—In this time of distress. **Will of God**—As shown in his providential dealings. **Commit**—With most absolute, unfaltering trust, whatever befalls. **Their souls**—Their bodies and lives, indeed, but especially their **souls,** joining all holy obedience to their faith, so that they would be filled with his Spirit and kept from forsaking Christ in the hour of peril; and, if their lives were lost, they would be saved in heaven. **A faithful Creator**—Who, with all his wisdom, power, and love, is forever faithful to his faithful covenant people.

CHAPTER V.

7. Exhortations to the elders, and also to the Church, 1-9.

1. **The elders**—Officially so, having pastoral charge in the local churches. In times of persecution, much depended on their prudence and fidelity. Tregelles and Alford insert here a *therefore.* **Also an elder**—Better, *a fellow elder,* holding a common office with them. **Witness**—To testify to the **sufferings of Christ,** as in chapter iv, 1. The word does not mean *eye-witness,* as Alford puts it, although St. Peter doubtless did see his suffering Lord on the cross. Luke xxiii, 49. **A partaker of the glory**—By virtue of the condition of his joint-heirship with Christ, "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. viii, 17. **Be revealed**—In heaven.

THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am also [a]an elder, and [b]a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also [c]a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 Tim. 1. 12.—*a* Philem. 9.—*b* Luke 24. 48; Acts 1. 8, 22; 5. 32; 10. 39.—*c* Rom. 8. 17, 18; Rev. 1. 9.

2 [d]Feed the flock of God [1]which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, [e]not by constraint, but willingly; [f]not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **3** Neither as [2]s being lords over [h]*God's* heritage, but [1]being ensamples to the flock. **4** And when [k]the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive [l]a crown of glory [m]that fadeth not away. **5** Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, [n]all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed

d John 21. 15–17; Acts 20. 28.——1 Or, *as much as in you is.*——*e* 1 Cor. 9. 17.——*f* 1 Tim. 3. 3, 8; Titus 1. 7.——2 Or, *overruling.*——*g* Ezra 34. 4; Matt. 20. 25, 26; 1 Cor. 3. 9; 2 Cor. 1. 24.

h Psa. 33. 12; 74. 2.——*i* Phil. 3. 17; 2 Thess. 3. 9; 1 Tim. 4. 12; Titus 2. 7.——*k* Heb. 13. 20.——*l* 1 Cor. 9. 25; 2 Tim. 4. 8; James 1. 12.——*m* Chap. 1. 4.——*n* Rom. 12. 10; Eph. 5. 21; Phil. 2. 3.

Thus solemnly and tenderly does the apostle prepare the way for his exhortation.

2. **Feed the flock**—Rather, *Tend the flock.* **The flock** is the Church, and belongs to God; the work of the elders is to tend it as shepherds, guiding, teaching, watching, feeding. It can hardly be that there was not present in St. Peter's mind the memorable scene on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, (John xxi, 15–17,) in which Jesus used to him nearly the same words: "*Tend my sheep.*" All that it meant as addressed to him, it means here as addressed to **the elders. Taking... thereof**—Overseeing, superintending, doing the work of bishops. The time had not then come when, as in a more complete organization of the Church, the designation of Bishop was specially given to the president of the presbyters. How this **oversight** should be exercised, is specified in three particulars, negatively and positively: (1) As to the spirit, **not by constraint,** as if under compulsion or necessity, and against the will, as might naturally be the case in view of the weightier burdens or the greater exposure to the malice of persecutors; **but willingly,** freely, and with the fulness of consecrated souls. (2) The motive. **Not for filthy lucre**—Base gain. It is, indeed, the Lord's ordinance that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel," (1 Cor. ix, 14,) but base is the minister who makes the money gained his motive. **Ready mind**—With alacrity and zeal, from love of the Church and of souls.

3. As (3) to manner. **Neither ... lords over**—*Not as lording it.* History furnishes a sad commentary on this injunction in the pretended successors of St. Peter in the papal chair claiming to be apostolic lords, vicegerents of Christ, with supreme authority over all kings, kingdoms, and people, and addressed as Most Holy Lord, and, Our Lord God the Pope. **Heritage**—The word means a portion assigned by lot; and thence an assignment by any means. It here is the *portions* of the Church committed to the charge of the elders severally. **But...ensamples**—Patterns of holy living instead of lordly tyrants.

4. **The chief Shepherd**—"Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep," (Heb. xiii, 20,) whose is **the flock,** and to whom all pastors must give account. **A crown**—Rather, *the* **crown**; *the amaranthine* **crown of glory,** a crown as if made of glory, and, like the amaranth, or everlasting flower, unfading. Such bliss will the faithful pastor **receive** when Christ **shall appear** at his second advent.

5. **Ye younger**—Not simply younger in years, as opposed to **elder,** which must here mean, as in verse 1, **elders** in office. Many understand the laity, the rest of the congregation, to be meant, upon whom obedience to their ministers is enjoined, as in Heb. xiii, 17; others, the deacons, or at least a class of ministers inferior and subordinate to the presbyters. The clear distinction made, and a comparison with Luke xxii, 26, 27, where the "greater" and "younger" are similarly opposed, would seem to confirm this view. **All...clothed with humility**—Both pastors and people are to use their relative positions for the

with humility: for [o] God resisteth the proud, and [p] giveth grace to the humble. **6** [q] Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: **7** [r] Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. **8** [s] Be sober, be vigilant; because [t] your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: **9** [u] Whom resist steadfast in the faith, [v] knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, [w] who

o Jas. 4. 6.——*p* Isa. 57. 15; 66. 2.——*q* Jas. 4.10. ——*r* Psa. 37. 5; 55. 22; Matt. 6. 25; Luke 12. 11; Phil. 4. 6; Heb. 13. 5.——*s* Luke 21. 34; 1 Thess. 5. 6; chap. 4. 7.——*t* Job 1. 7; 2. 2; Luke 22. 31; Rev. 12. 12.——*u* Eph. 6. 11; James 4. 7.——*v* Acts 14. 22; 1 Thess. 3. 3; 2 Tim. 3. 12.——*w* 1 Cor. 1. 9; 1 Tim. 6. 12.

service and benefit of one another, as belonging to a common brotherhood. The Greek for **clothed** is very significant. It refers to a long, coarse apron, or garment, that was worn by servants as a badge of service. As a servant girded himself with it for his work, so are Christians to put on **humility,** both in spirit and demeanour, that they may serve one another. Alford suggests that the allusion is to our Lord's girding himself with a towel and washing his disciples' feet. John xiii, 4, 5. **God resisteth**—Sets himself in battle array against **the proud,** as they, in their arrogance, are set against him or his people. See Prov. iii, 34.

6. **Humble yourselves therefore**—Because God thus resists **the proud** and gives **grace** to the lowly-minded, enabling them to endure, and lifting them up in times of trouble and persecution, they are exhorted to receive with perfect submission all things that befall them under the government of the Lord, in the full assurance that soon or late, in his own way and **time,** he will **exalt** them in the removal of the trouble, or in taking them to himself.

7. **Casting**—Aorist: *Casting off upon,* once for all: **casting** off from **yourselves** the whole of **your care** and anxiety, and reposing it **upon him.** This does not mean every care as it arises, but it goes further back, to the laying of ourselves, with all that pertains to us, in God's hands, in the fulness of a surrendering faith. If then some new subject of care arises, faith at once recognises it as belonging not to us but to him. So does most blessed, heavenly peace, reign within, under the knowledge that God **careth for** us, which is the reason for our not bearing the burden ourselves.

8. **Be sober**—Circumspect, watchful. **Be vigilant**—Wide awake: and with good reason for both precepts. **Your adversary**—The adversary of you, in particular. The word means the adverse party in a suit; an accuser in a court of law. **The devil**—Satan, prince of the devils; not, now, as the subtle serpent or an angel of light, but as a terrible **lion, roaring** through hunger, and raging to destroy. **Walketh about**—Up and down in the earth, as in Job ii, 7; but just now, in particular, in Pontus and the adjacent countries. That Satan's proper dwelling-place is in the abyss does not prevent his appearing on the earth. His errand at this time was, as chief persecutor, to rouse persecutors, and use them as his instruments to frighten Christians from their faith, or, in case of failure, to destroy them. The apostle well knew the value of his warning, for he had once himself, from not heeding it as given by Christ, denied his Lord.

9. **Whom resist**—Stand against him to the very last. Never surrender or compromise. **Steadfast**—Solid and immovable in **faith** in Christ, the sure means of victory. Nor must they think their case an exception, for they knew that **the same** persecutions were carried on among their **brethren** throughout **the world.** The Christian name was everywhere hated.

8. Benedictions, salutations, and conclusion, 10-14.

10. Over against the fearful picture just drawn is the brighter one of **eternal glory. The God...grace**

hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered [x] awhile, [y] make you perfect, [z] stablish, strengthen, settle *you*. **11** [a] To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. **12** [b] By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have [c] written briefly, exhorting, and testifying [d] that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. **13** The *church that is* at Babylon, elected together with *you*, saluteth you; and *so doth* [e] Marcus my son. **14** [f] Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. [g] Peace *be* with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

[x] 2 Cor. 4. 17; chap. 1. 6.—[y] Heb. 13. 21; Jude 24.—[z] 2 Thess. 2. 17; 3. 3.—[a] Chap. 4. 11; Rev. 1. 6.—[b] 2 Cor. 1. 19.—[c] Heb. 13. 22.

[d] Acts 20. 24; 1 Cor. 15. 1; 2 Peter 1. 12.—[e] Acts 12. 12.—[f] Rom. 16. 16; 1 Cor. 16. 20; 2 Cor. 13. 12; 1 Thess. 5. 26.—[g] Eph. 6. 23.

—The fountain and giver of grace, all needed grace, and grace for every occasion. That he **called** us is proof of his grace, while both the grace and the call are through the merit of **Christ Jesus,** and the ultimate purpose of both is, to bring all who obediently accept the call, and faithfully use the grace, **unto his eternal glory.** But the road to that glory lies through tribulations; and in the fire of suffering, grace often does its most perfect work. **Suffered awhile**—Suffered *a little*, either in time or in amount. If the former, how short the suffering prelude to the eternity of glory; if the latter, how light the affliction in view of the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!" 2 Cor. iv, 17. **Make you perfect**—So that in your religious life will remain no defect. In the best texts, these verbs are future. *Will himself make you perfect.* **Stablish**—Make you firm in all duty. **Strengthen**—By giving inward power. **Settle**—Ground you, making you immovable.

11. **To him**—The God of all grace. **Be glory**—For this abundant grace. **Dominion**—The might shown in performing what is thus promised.

12. **Silvanus**—Doubtless the companion of St. Paul named in 1 Thess. i, 1, and elsewhere, and the Silas of the Acts. He accompanied St. Paul (Acts xv, 40) on his second missionary tour through Asia Minor, becoming personally known to many of the Churches. **As I suppose** — As I judge him to be. St. Peter's want of personal knowledge of Silvanus's relation to the Asiatic Churches, explains this modest yet full endorsement of him as **unto you** *the* **faithful brother. Written briefly** — St. Paul's longer epistle to the Hebrews was "in few words." Heb. xiii, 22. **Exhorting** —In which the epistle largely abounds. **Testifying**—And he was competent to give the testimony, **that this** grace in which they had been instructed, and in which they were then standing, **is the true grace of God.**

13. **The Church...with you**—Literally, *The co-elect at Babylon.* Some, as Alford, understand Peter's wife. 1 Cor. ix, 5. Most expositors understand *the Church*, which, indeed, the Sinaitic MS. inserts. Wordsworth would read *the co-elect dispersion* at Babylon, as the epistle is addressed to *the elect dispersion* in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythinia. This seems the most reasonable. **Babylon** — See Introduction. **Marcus my son**—Literally so, if the previous clause refers to the apostle's wife. Otherwise, John Mark the evangelist, the follower and disciple of St. Peter.

14. **A kiss of charity**—In token of Christian love, exchanged only between persons of the same sex. See note on Rom. xvi, 16.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

THE external evidence of St. Peter's authorship of this epistle is not strong. Several of the Fathers, as Clement of Rome, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, Theophilus of Antioch, and Irenæus, use expressions strikingly similar to some found in the epistle, which may have been quotations from it, and, again, may have been phraseology current among Christians, or allusions to the Old Testament. The Apology of Melito, however, refers to the final conflagration in terms that seem evidently based on chap. iii, 6, 7. In the Latin translation of Origen by Rufinus, the epistle is twice quoted; but Eusebius cites him as doubting it, and in his works extant in Greek he impliedly excludes it. Firmilian, in the third century, in a letter to Cyprian, says, "The blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, in their epistles cursed heretics;" and only in the second does St. Peter denounce them. Eusebius classes it with the doubtful. Jerome says, St. Peter "wrote two epistles, the second of which is by most denied to be his, on account of its difference in style from the first." It was accepted by the Council of Laodicea, A. D. 367, and by the Council of Carthage, A. D. 397, and by most of the writers of the fourth century. It is not in the Muratorian canon, or in the Peshito; yet it is inserted as an accepted book in the chief ancient catalogues. After the fourth century, its acceptance became universal; but at the Reformation the question was taken up anew. At the present time it is accepted by most anti-Rationalists.

The historical argument against the authenticity of the epistle rests chiefly, except as stated by Jerome, on omission. No ancient writer denies St. Peter's authorship on historical grounds. The epistle existed; it also had external credentials by which it was authenticated, or it could not have been anywhere received. From its character it is evidently a document which would come slowly into circulation, and be less frequently cited than some others. Jerome's statement suggests the real difficulty, which seems to have originated at Alexandria.

The internal evidence, however, is very strong. The epistle, in its first words, claims to have been written by St. Peter; and it asserts ir-

self as a "second epistle" of the same author, written to the same people, and with a like purpose. Chap. iii, 1. The writer declares himself to have been an eye-witness of the glory of the transfiguration, and to have heard the "voice" which came "from the excellent glory." Only St. Peter, or a most daring impostor, could have been the author; and that a forgery so glaring could have escaped detection on its first appearance seems hardly conceivable. Moreover, a comparison of the Greek text shows peculiar words and terms common to the two epistles, and also certain words that belong to St. Peter, as seen by his speeches in the Acts, which go very far in favor of an identity of authorship.

The "difference in style," which incited the doubts of the Alexandrian critics, is no more than might be expected from the difference in the subjects treated. In the first, it is the encouragement and assurance of loving and rejoicing believers, by the familiar truths of the gospel, especially the redemption by Christ and the hope of the glory to be revealed. The style and diction are those of the tender, sympathetic pastor. In the second, the apostle has his eye upon heretics, deniers of the lordship of Christ, rebels against his authority, subverters of the gospel, and scoffers at his predicted advent. His purpose is, to build up against the error by firmly asserting the opposing truth, and to expose and denounce the principles and conduct of those who were undermining the very foundations of the gospel. Naturally, instead of the "Christ" and "Jesus Christ"—not once using *Saviour*—of the first epistle, he declares him in the second, as "Jesus our Lord," "the Lord and Saviour," and "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," always careful to assert his high dignity. In the first epistle, the second advent is "the revelation of Christ" for the glory and joy of his saints; in the second, it is presented in the sterner aspect of "the day of judgment," "the day of the Lord," and "the day of God," when fit retribution shall fall upon the corrupt and the scornful. Equally different is the light in which the gospel is viewed. In the first, the attention of the reader is fixed upon hope, salvation, grace, truth, and the word of truth: in the second, "the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" is fundamental to all spiritual life, and an increasing knowledge of him is essential to genuine spiritual character and growth; while a departure from it leads to the destruction so forcibly described.

The antinomian "false teachers" of this epistle were Gnostics; but they cannot be identified with any one of the several classes of heretics that at a later day developed more or less of their characteristics. Those sects were as yet existing only in the germ; but there was an agreement in the fundamental principle that all evil resided in matter,

There is a singular unanimity among the Fathers in ascribing the origin of these heresies to Simon Magus. St. Paul early discerned the beginning of the evil that threatened the Church, and failed not to sound the alarm. Acts xx, 29; 1 Tim. iv, 1–3; 2 Tim. iii, 1–5. St. Peter, too, saw the inevitable tendency of the prevalent speculations, as well as the tainted fruit already borne, and in brave, earnest words predicted the terrible consequent demoralization and corruption, hoping, as is evident from his concluding words, to check the error by holding his brethren to the gospel.

If, as seems probable, St. Peter was arrested at Babylon, that must have been the place of the writing of the epistle. We place it in the last year of his life, and among his closing labors—probably late in A. D. 67 or early in A. D. 68.

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I. Earnest appeal for Christian graces and solemn diligence ..... i, 1-21

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III. The error of expecting an immediate advent corrected ... iii, 1–18

1. Fatal error of expecting Christ's immediate coming, from the immediateness in the terms in which it is predicted ..... iii, 1-13
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THE

SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

CHAPTER I.

SIMON [1] Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained [a] like precious faith with us through the right-

1 Or, *Symeon*, Acts 15. 14.—*a* Rom. 1. 12; 2 Cor. 4. 13; Eph. 4. 5; Titus 1. 4.

CHAPTER I.

I. Earnest appeal for Christian graces and solemn diligence, 1–21.

1. Peter's address to those of like faith; and benediction, 1, 2.

1. **Simon** — Greek, *Symeon*, used only here and by James in Acts xv, 14. **Servant**—So St. Paul, Rom. i, 1. **An apostle**—See on 1 Pet. i, 1. The assertion of apostolic authority is here eminently important in view of the purpose to set forth the true doctrine of Christ in opposition to the heresies of false teachers. **To them**—The same persons primarily as are addressed in the first epistle, (chap. iii, 1,) yet including all believers in Christ. It is, thence, a catholic epistle. **Have obtained**—As a gracious gift, as if by divine *allotment*. **Like precious faith**—A faith of equal value with that which the apostles themselves possessed, procuring the same salvation and on the same terms. **Through the righteousness**—Rather, *in* the righteousness. Righteousness is not the instrument by which faith results, but the element in which it rests. Nor do we understand by it God's attribute of righteousness, or his righteous way of dealing, but the righteousness which he gives to the believer. To those in this state of salvation this epistle is addressed. **Of God and our Saviour**—In the English form the first term signifies the Father and the second the Son; but the

cousness [2] of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: **2** [b] Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine pow-

2 Greek, *of our God and Saviour*, Titus 2. 13. —*b* Dan. 4. 1; 6. 25; 1 Peter 1. 2; Jude 2.

Greek requires us to read, *Of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*, thus identifying **God** with **Christ.** Note on Titus i, 3. At the outset the apostle asserts the Godhead of Christ, in view of the errorists against whom he is writing.

2. **Grace**—In which the believer lives. **Peace**—Its fruit. **Be multiplied**—With this prayer for increase agrees the final exhortation to growth, in chap. iii, 18. **Through the knowledge**—Ἐπίγνωσις, *knowledge upon, full knowledge;* the keynote of the epistle. It occurs, also, in verses 3, 8, and chap. ii, 20. **Of God**—The Father, who is truly known only as revealed in the Son. **Of Jesus our Lord** — The Saviour, who is also supreme Lord. This unusual expression, found only here and in Romans iv, 24, lifts the standard against the deniers of chapter ii, 1. This **knowledge** is both doctrinal and experimental. It lies at the foundation of all true religion, and is the element in which all **grace** and **peace** begin and grow. Moreover, increase of the knowledge is the indispensable condition of increase in the grace.

2. God's great gifts and promises call for rich Christian culture and graces, 3-9.

3. A proper punctuation commences here a new sentence, which extends through verse 7. **According as**—Rather, *Forasmuch as;* laying the foundation for the exhortation in

er hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, [c] through the knowledge of him [d] that hath called us [3] to glory and virtue: **4** [e] Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be [f] partakers of the divine nature, [g] having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. **5** And besides this, [h] giving all diligence,

[c] John 17. 3.—[d] 1 Thess. 2. 12; 4. 7; 2 Thess. 2. 14; 2 Tim. 1. 9; 1 Pet. 2. 9; 3. 9.—[3] Or, *by*.

[e] 2 Cor. 7. 1.—[f] 2 Cor. 3. 18; Eph. 4. 24; Heb. 12. 10; 1 John 3. 2.—[g] Ch. 2. 18, 20.—[h] Ch. 3. 18.

verses 5–7. **Given...us all things**—Whatever pertains to the work of salvation and the life of holiness is God's gracious gift, originating in, and bestowed by, him. The **all things** is, in the Greek, emphatic, and must be taken in the broadest sense, as including whatever is in any way connected with raising us up from the death and ruin of sin to the fulness of the glory of heaven. They are brought to us by **his divine power**; probably referring less to its operation in their provision, as in the incarnation and resurrection, than to it in the actual gift of salvation. **Life**—Spiritual life. **Godliness**—Reverential piety toward God. The two words express inward and outward holiness. **Through the knowledge**—No mystical rites or superstitious observances can obtain the least of the **all things**: the declared and successful instrument is **knowledge**, the coming to a *full* knowledge. *Grace* and **power** are the supernatural essentials to holiness, but they work through the truth received, and in accord with our rational nature. **Him that hath called us**—God, yet, nevertheless, *our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*, as in verse 1, and especially because verse 8 defines the **knowledge** as of **our Lord Jesus Christ**. **To glory and virtue**—The best texts agree in reading, *By his own glory and virtue*. **Glory** belongs to his Godhead: **virtue** is, as in the Greek of 1 Pet. ii, 9, his moral excellence and perfections. By all the attributes of his nature he **called us** to the blessings of the gospel.

4. **Whereby**—*By which*, namely, his own glory and virtue. **Are given**—Better, *He hath given*. He who **called us** has also, by the same instruments, supplied the means of attaining the object of the call. **Exceeding great**—Rather, *the greatest*, greater cannot easily be conceived. **Precious**—Of inestimable value in themselves, and costly in their price. The **promises** are not Old Testament promises of gospel blessings, but general promises contained in the gospel itself, such as of pardon of sin to the penitent, the ever-availing atonement and powerful intercession of Christ, and the renewing and sanctifying Spirit. **That by these**—By means of these promises, heartily believed in and fulfilled. **Ye might be**—Rather, *Ye may become;* for it is to be completed as well as begun. The apostle now changes from the **us** hitherto used, meaning Christians in general, to **ye**, bringing the grand *aim* of these glorious promises directly home to his readers. **Partakers of the divine nature**—Pantheism holds that we, and indeed all things, are a part of God. Buddhism teaches the highest perfection to be absorption into God, ultimating in nonentity. Christianity, by the divine presence in us, makes us like God in holiness, love, and all the characteristics of his moral nature. This is Christian perfection. Beginning in the new birth, its advancement and completion are by the **promises**, which belong to the **all things**; so that most truly does **divine power** work out for faithful believers the **divine nature**. Fundamental to all, however, is the *fleeing away* from, the renunciation of, the moral **corruption** that so widely befouls **the world**, and that has its source in base, wicked **lust**. God's call is to purity: that of the false teachers is to **corruption**. Chap. ii, 18.

5. **And besides this**—Rather, *Even for this very reason*. **Giving**—The Greek means, *bringing in by the side of*. God has done his part, as shown in

add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, [i]knowledge; **6** And to knowledge, [k]temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; **7** And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and [l]to brotherly kindness, charity. **8** For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* [4]barren [m]nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** But he that lacketh these things [n]is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was [o]purged from his old sins.

i 1 Peter 3. 7.—*k* Acts 24. 25; 1 Corinthians 9. 25; Galatians 5. 23; Titus 1. 8.—*l* Galatians 6. 10; 1 Thess. 3. 12; 5. 15; 1 John 4. 21.

4 Greek, *idle.*—*m* John 15. 2; Titus 3. 14.—*n* 1 John 2. 9, 11.—*o* Ephesians 5. 26; Hebrews 9. 14; 1 John 1. 7.

verses 3, 4; now do you do your part in bringing your own **diligence** into action by the side of what he has done. **Add to your faith**—Rather, *furnish in your faith;* that is, in the exercise of your **faith** furnish, besides it, **virtue.** The verb originally means to furnish the musicians and equipments of a chorus. In this choir of Christian graces each added one, as Bengel suggests, prepares for the next, and corrects and perfects that which precedes. **Faith** is already in possession, (verse 1;) but faith may become feeble or antinomian. Therefore, in its exercise, furnish **virtue,** or all moral excellence, especially courage to do and suffer. Lest virtue, unguarded, should be impulsive or rash, furnish in it **knowledge** of God, truth, self, and duty.

6. **Knowledge,** perverted, may become conceited and self-indulgent, as in the idol feasts at Corinth, (1 Cor. viii, 1, 10,) and in the teachings of the Gnostics; in your **knowledge,** therefore, furnish **temperance**—*self-control*—by which all desires and passions shall be held in proper check, often even to total abstinence, as, for instance, in intoxicating drinks. The question of amusements falls under this rule. But as severe self-control may become ascetic and intolerant, it must be tempered by **patience,** or *patient endurance;* and in exercising patience, to guard against a stoical apathy or indifference, furnish **godliness,** fearing, trusting, and communing with God.

7. **Godliness,** unguarded, becomes morose and estranged from brethren, and loves its own solitude; therefore, in your **godliness** furnish **brotherly kindness,** or rather, *brotherly love.* And lest this become narrow and bigoted, in your love of the Christian brotherhood, furnish **charity,** a love that looks out beyond and embraces all mankind. Of these graces, love, then, is the crown. The order is not that of succession, for they all grow together, and are all essential to a full symmetrical Christian character.

8. **These things**—The graces just enumerated. **Be in you**—Not merely existing, but residing. **Abound**—Increase and grow, as they ought and will, if, while God does his part, we are careful to do ours toward becoming partakers of the divine nature. **They make you**—Such is their true function. Sanctification is by faith, indeed, but **these things** must accompany the faith. **Barren**—Better, *Inactive.* **In the knowledge**—Rather, *Toward the full knowledge.* This is the goal. The culture and increase of these graces leave no room for idle dreams; and work produces its fruit in a true progress toward **the** perfect **knowledge of our Lord,** *the Sovereign;* **Jesus,** the *Saviour;* **Christ,** *the Messiah.*

9. **But**—*For;* enforcing ver. 8 from the contrary view. **He that lacketh these things**—Literally, *To whom these things are not present;* making a sharp contrast with **be in you,** in verse 8. They should supplement **faith,** but do not. **Is blind**—To God's law of holiness, and self-blinded by his own neglect. **Cannot see afar off**—Literally, *is near-sighted.* He sees only things near by—as the present moment and personal gratification; and constant looking at objects close to the eyes destroys the power of seeing those at a distance. **And hath forgotten . . . purged** — Literally, *Having*

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence [p] to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, [q] ye shall never fall: **11** For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

[p] 1 John 3. 19.—[q] Chap. 3. 17.—[r] Rom. 15. 14, 15; Phil. 3. 1; chap. 3. 1; 1 John 2. 21; Jude 5.

received forgetfulness of the purification of his former sins. The simple falling out of memory of so momentous an event as the soul's cleansing from sin, is sad; but here is lethean forgetfulness inflicted by a judicial hand. So backsliders sometimes come to deny that they were ever pardoned.

3. And for diligence to secure our election and heavenly entrance, 10, 11.

10. **Give diligence**—In ceaseless effort, because of what has just been urged, and of the promised glorious result. **Your calling**—To faith and holiness. **Election**—To a place in the spiritual Israel. **Sure**—Firm, secure, a proven fact. The reason assigned is, **if ye do these things, ye shall never fall;** and, as St. Peter could not employ an unmeaning hypothesis, it follows, if ye do not these things, ye surely will **fall.** The **calling** and **election** are both God's work. The **calling** precedes the **election,** both in the text and in order of fact. These **brethren** had been *called;* they were also *elect,* (1 Pet. i, 1,) and elected on their acceptance of the call. The apostle's object was not, as some theologians suppose, to show how they might themselves *assuredly know* that they were truly called and elected, but to teach them how to maintain their already accomplished **calling and election** to the end. They might **fall;** in which case the election would become null, and their rejection of God would be followed by his rejection of them from his elect people. The absurdity of a **fall** from something they had never had, is a conception of a later date.

11. **For so**—You, for your part,

12 Wherefore [r] I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, [s] though ye know *them,* and be established in the present truth. **13** Yea, I think it meet, [t] as long as I am in this tabernacle, [u] to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance; **14** [v] Knowing that

[s] 1 Pet. 5. 12; chap. 3. 17.—[t] 2 Cor. 5. 1, 4.—[u] Chap. 3. 1.—[v] Deut. 4. 21, 22; 31. 14; 2 Tim. 4. 6.

doing **these things. Shall be ministered**—The same Greek as **add,** verse 5. God, on his part, will richly furnish you with your hoped-for **entrance** into the heavenly kingdom. Thus God's work and man's work unite in securing our eternal salvation. **Kingdom...Christ**—The assertion of the kingship of Christ fitly closes the discussion.

4. Hence, this his solemn apostolic reminder, specially in view of his near decease, 12-15.

12. **Wherefore**—Because the only way for you to heaven is that above set forth. **I...not...negligent**—The best texts have μελλήσω, *I shall be about to,* nearly equivalent to, *I shall be careful.* Here speaks the faithful pastor. **These things**—The things already written and those connected with them. They already had his first epistle, and would soon receive the present one, by which they would **always** be reminded of these vital truths. **Ye know**—Yet need the reminder. **Established**—With firm conviction. **The present truth**—Not the truth herein set forth, but **the truth** already received and **present** with them.

13. **In this tabernacle**—His body, the tent in which the **I,** the real Peter, dwelt. See notes on 2 Cor. v, 1. He thinks it right, **as long** as he remains in it, to **stir** them **up** by reminding them of the truth, and admonishing them of the danger of departing from it through the seductions of the false teachers.

14. **Knowing**—The Lord Jesus had said to him, pointing to his death by martyrdom, "When thou shalt be old,

shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as [w] our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. **15** Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

[w] John 21. 18, 19. —[a] 1 Cor. 1. 17; 2. 1, 4; 2 Cor. 2. 17; 4. 2.

thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." John xxi, 18. He was now become old, and well knew that the end could not be far distant. It is not needful to suppose, as do some, that he had received a recent revelation of his death as near. **Shortly** — *Quickly, swiftly,* rather than *soon.* Whenever the departure might come, it would be sudden and rapid. Calmly does the apostle speak of the putting off of **my tabernacle,** as if it were a garment, leaving the inner man, the soul, living and untrammelled.

15. **I will endeavour**—The *give diligence* of verse 10. In verses 12, 13, he proposes a continued reminding of his readers during his life, but he now intends to enable them, after his death, to **always** remember his teachings. It may be, that besides the two epistles he also contemplated some further writing. **My decease**—The very word used in Luke ix, 31 of the topic of the conversation of Moses and Elias with Jesus; literally, *my exodus.* In three successive verses we have the *dwelling in,* the *putting off,* and the *going out of* **my tabernacle.** Clearly, St. Peter was no materialist or annihilationist.

5. For no fable is our gospel; being confirmed by the transfiguration voice, 16-18.

16. **Made known...power and coming**—It seems evident that the false teachers, in full view of whom the apostle is writing, had pronounced his teachings respecting the present lordship and future appearing of Christ without foundation. If **made known** refers to his oral teaching, we may learn its character from Acts ii, 32–36; iii, 16, 20. Our Lord's resurrection,

16 For we have not followed [x] cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but [y] were eyewitnesses of his majesty. **17** For he

[y] Matt. 17. 1, 2; Mark 9. 2; John 1. 14; 1 John 1. 1; 4. 14.

reign, and coming to judgment, were staple topics of apostolic preaching. A fine Pauline specimen is in Acts xvii, 31. More probably, however, the reference is to St. Peter's first epistle. **The power** of Christ is clearly declared. The "lively hope" is by his "resurrection." 1 Pet. i, 3. He is the Redeemer. 1 Pet. i, 18. He is "on the right hand of God," and supreme over "angels, and authorities, and powers." 1 Pet. iii, 22. He is the final Judge. 1 Pet. iv, 5. As to his **coming,** we read of his "appearing," 1 Peter i, 7; his "revelation," 1 Peter i, 13; the revealing of "his glory," 1 Pet. iv, 13; and the appearing of the "chief Shepherd," 1 Peter v, 4. That these things are *myths,* those false teachers asserted, and modern infidelity insists. **Cunningly devised fables** — Pagan mythology was full of them, as were the cabalistic stories of the Jews. Such, too, were the fanciful systems of the Gnostics and others. St. Peter may have had especially in mind his old acquaintance at Samaria, Simon Magus, who, besides giving himself out as "the great power of God," (Acts viii, 9, 10,) claimed that of him and his paramour, Helena, were born the angels, who made the world. Now, St. Peter says, it was not following such skilfully-devised fictions he **made known** the Lord's **power and coming.** On the other hand, he had had a personal view of his glory. **Were**—Better, *Had been made.* **Eyewitnesses**—A technical term given to those initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries, and allowed to have the nearest view of them. So Peter, James, and John, had been admitted to a full view of Christ's glorious **majesty** at his transfiguration. **Matt.** xvii, 1–5.

received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, [s]"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **18** And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in [t]the holy mount.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto [u]a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and

[s] Matt. 3. 17; 17. 5; Mark 1. 11; 9. 7; Luke 3. 22; 9. 35.

[t] Exodus 3. 5; Josh. 5. 15; Matt. 17. 6. — [u] Psa. 119. 105; John 5. 35.

17. **He received...honour** — In what the **voice** of **God, the Father** Almighty, declared. **And glory**—From the brightness of the overshadowing cloud of glory, transcending that of the transfigured Jesus, whose "face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." "We beheld his glory," said John, referring to the same scene, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." John i, 14. **There came ...glory**—Literally, *a voice was borne to him by the excellent glory, such as this*, **this is my beloved Son.** This **excellent glory** must be taken as identical with God.

18. **This voice...we heard**—And hearing, the three fell to the ground. **Holy mount**—Now generally admitted to be Mount Hermon, called **holy** because of this manifestation there, just as Moses at the burning bush in Horeb stood on "holy ground." See Exodus iii, 5. The apostle's personal presence, his personal seeing, and his personal hearing, as described by himself, show his competency for this solemn authentication. The facts thus testified to exhibit Christ as the proclaimed Son of God, and as possessing the full dignity and glory of that sonship.

How the transfiguration proves the second coming, is a difficult question with expositors. Some take it, as Wordsworth, as a type and pledge of the coming; but this is nowhere affirmed in Scripture; nor do we agree that Matt. xvi, 28, to which they refer, points to either the transfiguration or the coming. The transfiguration did present our Lord in his glorious personality and divine Lordship irrespective of any advent.

6. And by more sure spirit-moved prophecy, 19-21.

19. The connection with the preceding, as the *καὶ*, **also,** shows, is very close. **A more sure word**—It is incredible that St. Peter meant to say, as he is commonly understood, that the testimony of prophecy to Christ is **more sure** than his own, just given, of God's uttered words, or than that of miracles, like raising the dead; and his Greek, better translated, really says, *And we have more sure the prophetic word*, namely, respecting Christ's character and glory, than we had it before the transfiguration. That *word* or *doctrine*, pronounced him "Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth," (Isa. xlii, 1;) the audible words of God confirmed it; as did the scene on the mount the loftiest Old Testament description of him. Or, more generally, its predictions of him, (not prophecy generally,) summarized by St. Peter as "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," (1 Pet. i, 11,) are *confirmed* by their fulfilment. Bloomfield quotes from Rosenmüller, "The prophecies had always a great authority with us; but now they have a far greater, since we see events so aptly corresponding to the predictions." And thus, assured faith more firmly holds those of his kingdom and glory not yet fulfilled. **Whereunto...take heed**—In giving attention to the prophetic doctrine concerning Christ, **ye do well,** comparing it with the historic facts of his birth, life, character, death, resurrection, and exaltation, thus increasing in "the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Verses 2, 8. **As unto a light**—A lamp glimmering **in a dark** dismal **place,** and necessary **until the day dawn,** dispelling the

[c] the daystar arise in your hearts:
20 Knowing this first, that [d] no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. **21** For [e] the prophecy came not [5] in old time by the will of man: [f] but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

[c] Rev. 2. 28; 22. 16; 2 Cor. 4. 4, 6.—[d] Rom. 12. 6.—[e] 2 Tim. 3. 16; 1 Pet. 1. 11.

darkness. **The daystar**—*Phosphorus*, the morning star, the forerunner of the sun. The prophecies of Christ were intended to give a degree of light to benighted minds; feeble, indeed, as compared with that received from the evangelists: but their fulfilment shows clearly both the truth, and the way to happiness. To this light they were to **take heed.** There seems to be here no reference to the second coming of our Lord, as even Alford admits.

20. **Knowing this first**—The apostle knew well the need of this caution for all prophetic investigators. **No prophecy**—Not limited now, as in verse 19, but general. **Of any private interpretation**—"The cross of interpreters," says Wolf. Whitby, Macknight, Clarke, and others, understand *private invention* or *suggestion*, which, however, is about what is said in the next verse. Επίλυσις occurs only here, but its verb is used in Mark iv, 34, of Jesus's *expounding* his parables to his disciples; and its usual meaning is *explanation* or *interpretation.* The various expositions of **private** may be reduced to three:—(1) The prophets themselves often did not know the import of their own predictions. This is true; but it is no reason for the caution; nor does the divine inspiration of the prophecies explain the inability of the prophets to understand them. (2) Some refer it to the readers; but to bid them give attention to the prophecies, and then add that they cannot understand them, would be a singular procedure. Nevertheless, as matter of fact, prophetic interpretations before fulfilment are seldom verified by events, as, for instance, in the Jewish preconceptions of the Messiah. (3) As meaning that prophecy is not self-interpreting. St. Peter uses the word ἰδιος in eight other places, and in the sense of *its own* in every instance. This fits the caution, assuring them that the full meaning does not lie on the surface, and that they will need to search for it, as did the prophets themselves, (1 Pet. i, 10;) and also intimating that the explanation must be found in the event. The Gnostics interpreted many of the prophecies after their own fancies, often violently torturing them to adapt them to their own systems. On the other hand, though the prophecies are not self-interpreting, they are *true*, for they proceed from the Holy Ghost.

21. **Not...of man**—The Scripture prophecy had no human author. It was not *borne* to the prophet or to men by **the will** of himself or of any man. He was simply the instrument in delivering it. **Holy men of God**—They were called to a **holy** office and used in a **holy** work; besides which, they were, as a rule, **holy** in character and life. But holiness does not constitute a prophet. They **spake, *being borne* by the Holy Ghost.** He was sole author: their minds and speech were taken possession of, and borne along by his might, and made to utter, under his impulse, whatsoever he pleased, whether they at the time understood it or not.

[5] Or, *at any time.*—[f] 2 Sam. 23. 2; Luke 1. 70; Acts 1. 16; 3. 18.—[a] Deut. 13. 1.

CHAPTER II.

BUT [a] there were false prophets also among the people, even

CHAPTER II.

II. Warning against false teachers soon to appear, ii, 1–22.

1. Their doctrine, influence, and doom, 1–3.

1. **False prophets**—While there were these **holy men** and true **prophets** among God's **people**, the ancient Israel, there were **false prophets** as well. Some pretended to be prophets

as [a]there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even [c]denying the Lord [d]that bought them, [e]and bring upon themselves swift destruction. **2** And many shall follow their [1]pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. **3** And [f]through covetousness shall they

[a] Matt. 24. 11; Acts 20. 30; 1 Cor. 11. 19; 1 Tim. 4. 1; 2 Tim. 3. 1, 5; 1 John 4. 1; Jude 18.——[c] Jude 4.——[d] 1 Cor. 6. 20; Gal. 3. 13; Eph. 1. 7; Heb. 10. 29; 1 Pet. 1. 18; Rev. 5. 9.——[e] Phil. 3. 19.——[1] Or, *lascivious ways*, as some copies read.——[f] Rom. 16. 18; 2 Cor. 12. 17, 18; 1 Tim. 6. 5; Tit. 1. 11.

who were not, and some prophesied "out of their own hearts," who followed "their own spirit," and saw "nothing." Deut. xviii, 20–22; Jer. xxviii, 15–17; Ezek. xiii, 2, 3. **False teachers**—Teachers of falsehood in the Church, the spiritual Israel. **Privily shall bring in**—Literally, *Shall bring in by the side of.* By the side of the true doctrine already received, they would bring in what *seemed* to be truth, not, at first, in open antagonism, but stealthily and unobservedly. **Damnable heresies**—Rather, *Heresies of destruction.* For they led to perdition. The word *heresy* ordinarily, in the New Testament, means a *sect* or *faction;* it here is nothing created or founded, but *brought in*, and must have the sense of *doctrine.* The character of these heretics is so fully described in this chapter that there is no mistaking their identity. Adopting the theory that all evil is in matter, they easily fell into the inference that the grossest immorality is consistent with sinless purity. The logical culmination of such a doctrine was in a denial of Christ's authority over them as Lord and Redeemer. On this shocking doctrinal heresy, so subversive of the glory of Christ, the apostle's mind hastens, as shown in his next words. **Denying the Lord that bought them**—Some think that God is meant, but incorrectly, for as idolatry is not alleged, that would make them atheists, which they were not. The word for **Lord** is δεσπότης, *master*, denoting supreme authority and sovereignty. These false teachers had charged St. Peter with misrepresenting, in his first epistle, the power and dignity of Christ. See notes on chapter i, 16. They denied, then, the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ; they denied his lordship over men and angels; and they denied the redeeming efficacy of his death. **Swift destruction**—As a result of this denial; for they repudiate the only Saviour. **The Lord** had **bought them** with his own blood; and yet they are miserably self-destroyed. It indisputably follows, from this passage, that some for whom Christ died will finally perish. Efforts are made to escape this inference; such, for instance, as Scott employs, who says, "It is not requisite to understand the apostle as declaring that the Lord Jesus Christ had died with an *intention* of redeeming these very persons." Most certainly not; yet he does expressly declare that Christ did redeem them; and he would be a bold man who would venture to affirm that he redeemed them without intending it.

2. **Their pernicious ways**—Most of the oldest and best authorities read **their** *licentiousness.* They carried their doctrine into practice; and the prediction that **many** would **follow** their example of dissoluteness, and think it purity, was abundantly fulfilled. Irenæus says, that Simon Magus taught that "they who believed in him were free to live as they pleased, and that men would be saved by his grace, and not according to their works; and that nothing is good by nature, but only by institution. And therefore his votaries live in lasciviousness." The immoral conduct of these Christian professors inevitably caused Christianity to **be evil spoken of.** Clemens Alexandrinus gives as a reason for his writing, the infamy brought upon the Christian name by the shameless lives of false teachers, and the necessity of disabusing the public mind.

3. **Through covetousness**—Rather, *in* it, living and moving in it as

with feigned words [g]make merchandise of you: [h]whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

4 For if God spared not [i]the angels [k]that sinned, but [l]cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; **5** And spared not the old world, but saved [m]Noah the eighth *person,* [n]a preacher of righteousness, [o]bringing in the flood upon the world of the

g 2 Cor. 2. 17; chapter 1. 16.—*h* Deut. 32. 35; Jude 4, 15.—*i* Job 4. 18; Jude 6.—*k* John 8. 44; 1 John 3. 8.

l Luke 8. 31; Rev. 20. 2, 3.—*m* Gen. 7. 1, 7, 23; Heb. 11. 7; 1 Peter 3. 20.—*n* 1 Peter 3. 19.—*o* Chapter 3. 6.

their atmosphere. **Feigned words**—Crafty, oily speeches. **Merchandise**—Gain; **make** money out of you. St. Paul found their parallels. See 1 Tim. vi, 5; Tit. i, 11. The commentators find them pervading Roman Catholic history. **Whose judgment**—God's condemnation of such sinners. **Lingereth not**—It may seem to be doing nothing, but it is really at work. **Damnation**—Eternal destruction. Years before, when Simon Magus sought to traffic with him for the power of conferring the Holy Ghost, St. Peter used the Greek of this very word: "May thy money be with thee unto *destruction.*" Acts viii, 20. **Slumbereth not**—It is not nodding, as if in a doze, but awake, to overwhelm them.

2. **The certainty of their punishment maintained from three historic precedents, 4-12.**

a. *First case—The fallen angels.*

4. **Angels that sinned**—When, why, how, or how many, we are nowhere informed. We only know that some **angels** "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," (Jude 6,) and that they **sinned.** Inasmuch as sin is transgression, it follows that they were living under law, and were therefore in a state of probation. By their sin they fell under God's displeasure and into swift punishment. **Cast...to hell**—Literally, *Thrust down to Tartarus.* Only here is the word found in the New Testament. In the Greek mythology, Tartarus is the lowest part of Hades. Hesiod (*Theog.* 721,) speaks of it as the place below the earth where the rebellious Titans are enchained and the souls of the wicked are confined; and Homer (*Il.* viii, 14–16) describes it as a deep gulf within the earth, with iron gates and a brazen entrance. Note Eph. iv, 10. Whatever be its real locality, St. Peter's use of the word shows the remoteness from heaven to which the fallen angels were driven, and the hopeless wretchedness into which they were plunged. **Delivered**—As prisoners. **Chains of darkness**—Chains made of darkness, expressive of the impossibility of regaining that world of light from which they were **cast down.** Tregelles and Alford read, *caverns of darkness.* **Reserved**—Kept in custody unto the day of final judgment. **God spared them not**—And the case shows his rule of punishment of sin.

b. *Second case—The antediluvians.*

5. **Spared not the old world**—That is, though his long suffering waited a hundred and twenty years for the repentance of the wicked, and though he gave them for that period the preaching and godly example of **Noah,** the blow, when the day of punishment came, was unsparing and terrible. **Saved**—Here comes in, by way of contrast, the idea of the preservation of the godly, which is as certainly God's law of action as is the punishment of the wicked. **Noah, the eighth**—Not the eighth preacher, as some say, but, according to a frequent idiom, **Noah,** and seven others. **A preacher**—St. Peter alone mentions Noah's preaching. He was *a proclaimer* **of righteousness,** heralding the coming flood, and exhorting the people to believe God, repent of their sins, obey him in holy living, and thus escape the impending wrath. Heb. xi, 7. But they refused, and that **world of the ungodly** was swept away. Such, and so terrible, is God

ungodly; **6** And [p] turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, [q] making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; **7** And [r] delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: **8** (For that righteous man dwelling among them, [s] in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds:) **9** [t] The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: **10** But chiefly [u] them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise [2] government. [v] Presumptuous *are they*, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

[p] Gen. 19. 24; Deut. 29. 23; Jude 7.—[q] Num. 26. 10.—[r] Gen. 19. 16.—[s] Psalm 119. 139, 158; Ezek. 9. 4.—[t] Psa. 34. 17, 19; 1 Cor. 10. 13.—[u] Jude 4, 7, 8, 10, 16.—[2] Or, *dominion*.—[v] Jude 8.

when he arises to judgment; and such will he always be, with as little regard to numbers and as great regard to character.

c. *Third case—The cities of the plain.*

6. **Sodom**—Interceded for by Abraham, but lacking its needed ten righteous men to save it. Gen. xviii, 32. The occasion and the manner of the destruction of these cities is narrated in Gen. xix. They are a standing **ensample** for **ungodly** men in all **after** time, warning them of the doom to which they are exposed. There are a full score of references to it in Scripture.

7. **Delivered**—A second example of preservation of the godly, in the case of **Lot.** Gen. xix, 12–23. **Just** is the same Greek with **righteous,** in verse 8. **Vexed**—Literally, *Worn down by the conduct of the lawless in licentiousness.* Ἄθεσμος, says Bloomfield, "signifies a despiser of all laws. The term is applied to these, because they did not live after that primeval law, partly of nature and partly of tradition, with which they were favoured."

8. Explanatory of the **vexed** in verse 7. **Vexed**—Lot tormented himself by what he daily saw and heard of their conduct. The inference is, that he sought to reform them, though unsuccessfully.

9. The conclusion from **for if,** of verse 4. **The Lord knoweth how**—And has both the *power* and *will* to do it, as he has showed. **To deliver**—As he did Noah and Lot, and as he always will his faithful people. **Temptation**—Any state of trial into which they are brought, by which their faith and obedience are proved. No *exemption from* temptation is promised; but we have the pledge of safety *in* it, and deliverance *out of* it. **The Lord knoweth,** also, equally well, with the same power and will, **how to reserve the** *unrighteous,* keeping them in custody **unto the day of judgment,** when their doom will be judicially pronounced. **To be punished**—Better, *Under punishment,* as the rich man in *hades,* (Luke xvi, 23,) and the fallen **angels,** (verse 4,) in a penal state, and awaiting full and final punishment in the great day. Such terms exclude the possibility of a second day of grace after death.

10. **But chiefly**—*Especially,* and most signally, does this knowing how to punish apply to the basely abominable characters here named. It was shown toward the people of Sodom, and it will be shown toward the false teachers and their followers. Bloomfield properly sends us to the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans as the best commentary on this passage. **Despise government**—Rather, *Despise lordship.* Opinions widely vary as to the proper reference, whether to God, Christ, Satan, angels, or civil magistrates. We think it is to Christ primarily, whom, as verse 1 informs us, the false teachers would deny, and then to all authority, human, angelic, and divine. **Presumptuous**—Daring men. **Speak evil of dignities**—Literally, *Blaspheme glories;* that is, those who exercise the lordship which they

11 Whereas [w] angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation [3] against them before the Lord. **12** But these, [x] as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

13 [y] And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as* they that count it pleasure [z] to riot in

w Jude 9. — 3 Some read, *against themselves.* — *x* Jer. 12. 3; Jude 10. — *y* Phil. 3. 19. — *z* Rom. 13. 13.

despise. Their blasphemy is, then, but the out-speaking of their inward contempt.

11. **Whereas angels**—Jude is evidently speaking of a different matter. These daring, opinionated, but weak and helpless sinners, profanely rail at even the Lord who bought them, while **angels,** vastly their superiors in every way, do not, in reporting the conduct of these false teachers, bring **against them** a **railing** judgment in the presence of **the Lord** their judge, but simply state the naked facts.

12. **These**—False teachers. **As... destroyed**—Rather, *As brute beasts, by nature born for capture and destruction.* They profess a superior knowledge, but, as if they had no more reason than irrational animals, they condemn and rail at things of which they know nothing, as the *glories* of verse 10; and thus acting like **beasts,** they shall **perish** like **beasts. In... corruption**—In it, as their element, they live; in it they grow; and in it they will go on until they **shall** *be corrupted to death,* **corruption** working out eternal **corruption.**

3. Their viciousness of life, 13-18.

13. **And shall receive** — Better, *Receiving.* This participial clause, ending with **unrighteousness,** is simply explanatory of **perish.** Perdition is their duly earned *wages.* **Count it** —Rather, *Counting* **it pleasure;** commencing with these words a new sentence of pungent invective, which continues through verse 16. In the daytime. [a] Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while [b] they feast with you; **14** Having eyes full of [4] adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: [c] a heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: **15** Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of [d] Balaam the *son* of Bosor, who

a Jude 12. — *b* 1 Cor. 11. 20, 21. — 4 Greek, *an adulteress.* — *c* Jude 11. — *d* Numbers 22. 5, 7, 21, 23, 28; Jude 11.

East it was a shameful disgrace to be drunken **in the daytime.** So 1 Thess. v, 7 describes the custom: "They that be drunken are drunken *in the night;*" but rioting by day would be a **pleasure** to these heretical profligates. **Spots**—Stains upon the Christian name. **Blemishes** — Disfigurements disgracing the Christian Church. Contrast with 1 Pet. i, 19. **Sporting** —Revelling in the fruits of their deceit or fraud. Instead, however, of *ἀπάταις, deceits,* Tregelles reads *ἀγάπαις, love-feasts.* This would mean that they make the love-feasts occasions for their baseness. But, in either case, **feast** undoubtedly refers to those festivals.

14. **Full of adultery**—Rather, *Of an adulteress.* At the love-feasts their very **eyes** speak their insatiable lust, and do not **cease from** the **sin** of lustful gazing. Matt. v, 28. **Beguiling**—Laying baits for those not established in Christian doctrine and life. **Exercised**—They had trained their **heart** so thoroughly in *covetousness,* as a gymnast trains himself, that they had become skilful experts in all its arts. **Cursed children** — Rather, *children of a curse,* like "the son of perdition." John xvii, 12. Their unblushing greed and abominable licentiousness had brought them where God's curse was abiding upon them.

15, 16. **The right way** — The *straight* way of Christian truth and duty. **The way of Balaam** was a *crooked* way. A **prophet** of Jehovah, he used his prophetic gift for gain;

loved the wages of unrighteousness; **16** But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade [e] the madness of the prophet. **17** [f] These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. **18** For when [g] they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that [h] were [5] clean escaped from them who live in error.

19 While they promise them [i] liberty, they themselves are [k] the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. **20** For [l] if after they [m] have escaped the pollutions of the world

e Eccles. 7. 25; 9. 3; Hos. 9. 7; Luke 6. 11; Acts 26. 11, 24.——*f* Jude 12. 13.——*g* Jude 16.——*h* Acts 2. 40; chap. 1. 4; verse 20.——5 Or, *for a little*, or, *a while*, as some read.

i Galatians 5. 13; 1 Peter 2. 16.——*k* John 8. 34; Romans 6. 16.——*l* Matthew 12. 45; Luke 11. 26; Hebrews 6. 4, &c.; 10. 26, 27.——*m* Chapter 1. 4; verse 18.

and for the sake of personal gain, *against the known will of God*, he sought to curse Israel. Numbers xxii, 7, 17. He was a fair type of these false teachers, who used the gospel for the gratification of their avarice. His counsel to Balak to tempt Israel to sin does not seem to be included here. **Rebuked...iniquity**—Not, we think, by the ass, but by the Angel of the Lord, an Old Testament designation of Christ himself, who said to him, "Thy way is perverse before me," extorting the confession, "I have sinned." Num. xxii, 32, 34. An additional element in the transaction was, the speaking of the dumb ass with a human voice; but the **madness** which she **forbade** was the foolish anger which led Balaam to smite her with a staff, and to wish that he had a sword with which he might kill her. Num. xxii, 27, 29. The ass showed more reason than did either Balaam or the false teachers. St. Peter, as against all sceptics, holds this as a true historical event.

17. **Wells**—They promise **water** to the thirsty traveller in the desert; but on his coming to them, they are dry. So **these** professed **greater** knowledge and purer truth, but the *water of life* they could not give to thirsty souls. **Clouds**—The best authorities read *mists*, which are clouds condensed, and darker, and give more promise of rain, so welcome in time of drought; but a whirlwind seizes and drives them away, and no rain falls. So with these teachers; they disappoint those that long for the truth. But their awful doom awaits them, for there is **reserved** for them the **mist**—rather, *the blackness* (which makes the chains of the fallen angels in Tartarus, verse 4)—**of darkness**, the deepest pit of hell.

18. **Speak...vanity**—Their talk is pompously grandiloquent, but full of *emptiness;* a pretentious sensationalism admirably adapted to catch the unthinking. Thus laying baits in their own **lusts**—preaching for truth doctrines that work by *licentiousness*—they **allure** those who have embraced the gospel, and are but a short time **escaped from** the influence of their old heathen associates. **Clean escaped**—We read with the best texts, *a little.* Recently converted, and not yet fully instructed, they are the more easily entrapped by these deceivers.

4. Their corruption and utter apostasy, 19-22.

19. **Promise...liberty** — Rather, *Promising them liberty, themselves being.* The **great swelling** was about **liberty;** nominally the Christian freedom which Christ effects for his people, (1 Pet. ii, 16,) but really a freedom to do as they pleased, being under no law and without restraint. Yet these promisers were most abject *slaves*, and ignorant of real **liberty.** The proof is on the very surface; they were **overcome** by **corruption,** and so were *made slaves* to **corruption,** John viii, 34; Rom. vi, 16.

20. The **servants of corruption,** not their victims, are meant **Es-**

[n] through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. **21** For [o] it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. **22** But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, [p] The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

n Chapter 1. 2.—o Luke 12. 47, 48; John 9. 41; 15. 22.—p Prov. 26. 11.

CHAPTER III.

THIS second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which [a] I stir up your [b] pure minds by way of remembrance: **2** That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, [c] and of the com-

a Chapter 1. 13; 2 Tim. 1. 6.—b Psalm 24. 4; 1 Tim. 5. 22; 1 Pet. 1. 22.—c Jude 17.

caped—The same word as in verse 18 and chap. i, 4. **Through the knowledge**—Rather, *in the* true, ripe, *full knowledge;* the element in, and the means by which, the escape was made, showing that it was not a mere external reformation and a profession of religion without saving grace, as some theologians would have it, but a true experience of its blessed power. They were by it brought into the *way of truth*, the *right way*, the *way of righteousness*. Vers. 2, 15, 21. **Entangled**—Interwoven with them. **Overcome**—And so again enslaved. **The latter end**—Their last state of vice, that is, since their apostasy, **is worse**—lower and fouler—than the first.

21. **Way of righteousness**—The way of justification from sin through faith in Christ, and of holy living. The laws for walking in this **way** constitute **the holy commandment** given them to be kept; but after keeping it for a time, they are now *turned back out of* it. Surely, then, they were once *in* it. Besides, the compound word rendered **known** means to know *increasingly*, and implies that they had once been living, growing Christians. **It had been better**—Because in ceasing to *add to* their *faith, virtue*, etc., (chap. i, 5,) they came to forget how Christ saved them, (chap. i, 9,) and fell into the guilt of apostasy and a lower depth of sin; because they sin against greater knowledge and have less excuse; and because they will therefore receive a severer punishment. Verses 20, 21 forcibly show the fall of these false teachers from a state of grace. Their certain doom is pronounced in verses 1, 3, 9, 12, 17.

22. **Proverb**—These fitting illustrations (Prov. xxvi, 11) of the brutish sensuality and disgusting moral filthiness into which these apostates had sunk, close the horrible description. Both were probably current sayings.

CHAPTER III.

III. Error of expecting a near advent corrected, 1–18.

1. The fatal error of expecting Christ's immediate coming, from the immediateness of the terms in which it is predicted, 1-13.

1. **This**—Literally, *This epistle, already beloved a second, unto you I write.* The first chapter is a general, yet direct, introductory address; the second chapter steps aside to portray the corruptionists to come; this resumes and finishes the direct **epistle. Now**—Literally, *already;* it is *already* a being-completed **second epistle. Pure minds**—In contrast with those corrupt minds whose portraiture occupies the last chapter. Those are the **ungodly men** of verse 7, bound to **perdition;** while **you,** warned of that **day of judgment,** will (verse 17) **beware. Remembrance**—The apostle delivers not so much a new prophecy as he recalls, explains, and applies a whole body of old prophecies.

2. **The holy prophets**—Of the Old Testament, whose predictions of a day of judgment all culminate in

mandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: **3** [d]Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, [e]walking after their own lusts, **4** And saying, [f]Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things con-

d 1 Timothy 4. 1; 2 Timothy 3. 1; Jude 18.—
e Chapter 2. 10.

f Isa. 5. 19; Jer. 17. 15; Ezek. 12. 22, 27; Matt 24. 48; Luke 12. 45.

the one final day. **The apostles** — Literal Greek, *your apostles of the Lord and Saviour.* These are *your* **apostles** as sent to you, and Christ's, as sent by him. The model comprehensive prediction is that of Matt. xxiv and xxv, on which see our notes.

3. **Knowing this first**—The great precaution is here now premised in regard to the judgment-day prophecies. The readers must not suppose that the terms of *immediacy* of time in the prophetic announcements of the second advent really mean that they are now, humanly, at hand. The same caution given in St. Paul's first epistle, (2 Thess. ii, 1,) is repeated in this, Peter's last. **The last days**—The very caution defines the phrase. They are **the last days** before the second advent, however far or near that day may be. That they may be a very distant **last days** it is the very purpose of the present passage to show, and to explain that the distance of time is not contradictory to the immediacy of the terms. See supplemental note to Matt. xxv. Also notes on 2 Thess. ii, 1–8; Rev. i, 1, 3; xxii, 20. **Scoffers**—These words, and the entire passage 3–5, we identify with Rev. xx, 7–9, when Satan, released from his millennial imprisonment, "the nations" are once more "deceived," and an apostasy takes place. Compare notes on Mark xiii, 24–27; Luke xviii, 8. **After their own lusts**—A sceptical spirit and a licentious life.

4. **Where is**—What has become of? These **scoffers** truly **come** from out the millennial Church. They long believed that old **promise** embraced in the Apostles' Creed, that Christ would "come to judge the quick and the dead." But ages have passed, and this **coming** is proved to be a ridiculous superstition. **His coming**—The word here is *parousia*, and when predicated of Christ, always denotes his literal bodily presence. The verb *come*, and noun *coming*, are often used of spiritual interpositions, but this *parousia* never. Note on 1 Cor. xv, 23. The word *parousia* occurs in the following passages: Matt. xxiv, 3, 37, 39; 1 Cor. xv, 23; 1 Thess. ii, 19; iii, 13; iv, 15; 2 Thess. ii, 1, 8, 9; James v, 7, 8; 2 Pet. i, 16; iii, 4, 12; 1 John ii, 28. **The fathers**—The old **fathers** of the Church, who predicted and believed in the second advent. Through all the ages, from their time to the day of these **scoffers,** no Christ has come. But Satan has come in his spiritual power; and he has deceived these sceptics into the belief that there is no judgment-day, no divine Christ, no true God. Let loose from all religious restraints, they "walk after their own lusts." **Continue as they were** — Literal Greek, *remain just so.* Dr. Chalmers was the first, we believe, to note that Peter here gives the argument of Hume against all miracle. It is the argument of *the visible permanence of the order of nature.* This continuous fact of the actual visible and reliable uniformity of nature's order, is formulated by some presumptuous scientists into such a law as to exclude the Creator from interposing in the very succession of events which his divine will carries on. But every sensible theist can understand that things would stop of themselves if not energized by the constant influx of divine energy, and it is nonsense to doubt whether He who continues the series cannot interpose his power and act between the events that compose the series. God interposed when he originated terrene life; he interposed when he first created man; he interposed by Christ's first advent; he will again interpose at his second advent. God's clock is a clock of ages; after a long period it strikes; and sceptics fix their

tinue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation. **5** For this they willingly are ignorant of, that [g] by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth [1] [h] standing out of the water and in the water: **6** [i] Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: **7** But [k] the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto [l] fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. **8** But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and [m] a thousand years as one day.

g Gen. 1. 6, 9; Psa. 33. 6; Heb. 11. 3.——1 Gr. *consisting.*——*h* Psa. 24. 2; 136. 6; Col. 1. 17.

i Gen. 7. 11, 21-23; chapter 2. 5.——*k* Verse 10.——*l* Matt. 25. 41; 2 Thess. 1. 8.——*m* Psa. 90. 4.

eyes on the length of that period, and forget that the stroke will ever again come. When God's hour is complete it is his own hand that strikes. **From the beginning of the creation**—Extending their affirmation a great way beyond their knowledge. That no interposition has ever taken place is more than any philosopher ever knew.

5. It is to the Flood that our apostle appeals as an instance of a great interposition. A suitable instance; for its mundane reality is attested by a world-wide spread of traditions among mankind. Whether the deluge was literally world-wide or not, it was a true instance of a mundane catastrophe, justifying the possibility of a still greater catastrophe from the hand of Him to whom this globe is a speck. **Willingly...ignorant**—Men do not know the truth because they wish not to know it. **Heavens...earth**—The same antithesis as in Gen. i, 1, where the **heavens** precede **the earth. Were of old**—The celestial long preceded the terrestrial. **Out of...in**—Rather, *through.* **The water**—The isles and continents project up **out of the water,** and stretch their long extensions *through* **the water.** The one phrase describes the upward rise of the lands from water, the other, the horizontal projection of lands *through* it.

6. **Whereby** — Literally, *through which;* that is, through, or by means of, the doubly-mentioned *waters.* By means of the *waters* the earth was **overflowed with water. Perished**—Not was annihilated, but wrecked and ruined; so as to require a renewal for any purpose of a moral kingdom of God on earth. A type, though perhaps a feeble one, of the final dissolution. As Adam Clarke notes, the divine fiat separating the oxygen of the atmosphere from the other elements could reduce the world to molten fluid. The same divine fiat could renew the earth in a new and divine perfection. All these changes *may,* under divine authority, take place in the natural order of cause and effect, or by the special interposition of the divine cause.

7. **Which are now**—In antithesis to **then was,** in verse 6. **By the same word**—Same as the **word** of verse 6. By that **word** the cosmos was created; by this, it is retained in existence. **Kept in store**—Literal Greek, *are treasured.* **Perdition**—Same Greek word as **perished,** in verse 6.

8. Our apostle now returns to the all-important caution in regard to time. It is on this point that the sceptical **scoffers** will fix. Remember that God's hours are ages. Note on Acts i, 7. **One day...a thousand years**—In the prophetic predictions of the second advent the Spirit speaks by the arithmetic of God, in which the terms *soon, quickly,* humanly indicating a few days, divinely allow a few ages. Psalm xc.

And now the question may well arise, Why has inspiration thus used phrases of such nearness to designate an event which was to be, as near two thousand years' experience has proved, so distant? Or, to express the thought in higher terms, Why has a divine arithmetic been thus used to express such a distance to human minds? Our reply would be this: The Spirit's purpose is, to preserve in our minds an

9 [n]The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but [o]is long-suffering to us-ward, [p]not willing that any should perish, but [q]that all should come to repent-

[n] Hab. 2. 3; Heb. 10. 37.—[o] Isa. 30. 18; 1 Pet. 3. 20; verse 15.—[p] Ezek. 18. 23, 32; 33. 11.—[q] Rom. 2. 4; 1 Tim. 2. 4.

ance. 10 But [r]the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which [s]the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also

[r] Matt. 24. 43; Luke 12. 39; 1 Thess. 5. 2; Rev 3. 3; 16. 15.—[s] Psa. 102. 26; Isa. 51. 6; Matt. 24. 35; Mark 13. 31; Rom. 8. 20; Heb. 1. 11; Rev. 20. 11; 21. 1.

impressive conception of its nearness in spite of its distance. The divine intention is, to prevent our banishing it from our thoughts on account of its far futurity. In its momentousness to us it is nigh at hand, and time is no rightful factor in our calculations. Nay, the very greatness of its distance, far millenniums, perhaps, hence, demands that thought and language should bring it near. Sensible time is very relative. To us in the intervening spirit-world millenniums may pass with inconceivable rapidity. There ever is to us but a step, as it were, to the judgment-day. Note on Matt. xxv, 6. Hence, Scripture uniformly points us, with warning, not to the day of death, but to the resurrection and the judgment-seat of Christ.

9. **Slack**—*Behind time;* like a rail-train that does not "come to time." The divine programme is not unfulfilled because the nearness of the advent does not fulfil the human words. **Is longsuffering**—He suffers long. The apostle here illustrates God's long delay with the world by his long delay with the impenitent. He spares a world as he spares a guilty man, in hopes of a result dear to the divine heart.

10. **Will come**—With an emphatic **will.** For what we may call the Apocalypse of St. Paul, we look to 1 Cor. xv, 22–57; 2 Thess. i, 7–10; and ii, 3–8. And so we find the Apocalypse of St. Peter in this chapter, 5–13. But it was reserved for St. John to furnish the great Apocalypse of the New Testament. All three supply special points, but all three agree in the great sublime whole. **As a thief**—With a sudden surprise to the sceptic **scoffers.** It will catch them in the midst of their scoffs, and rob them of their argument. **The heavens shall pass away**—Note that the *passing away* is not of the earth, but of the atmospheric **heavens** of our earth. The visible heavens, as seen to the terrene spectator, are seen to be swept away. They vanish as a scroll. Compare descriptions of the same scene in Rev. vi, 12–17; xx, 11–15; Matt. xxv, 31–46. **With a great noise**—The Greek word ῥοιζηδὸν expresses the whiz or friction of the air or other substance, as by a bird's wing or other sudden motion. It seems intended to describe the sound effected by a most violent collision of the atmospheric forces, or perhaps of the rushing earth and the air. **The elements**—Of which the material earth is composed. We have no reason to suppose that the solar system will be involved in the dissolution of our earth. **Melt with fervent heat**—Greek, *the elements about-being-burned will be fused.* The particles composing the material earth will be separated by the heat, and be ready for reconstruction into new and more perfect forms. **Earth...and...works...therein**—As an effect of the divided elements the surface-**earth,** and all its contents, are consumed and forever disappear. The theatre of human history goes down into non-existence. In the matter of consumption of the earth by physical fire, St. Paul and St. Peter agree; but John is silent. The "lake of fire" of St. John does not seem to belong to the same category, but is analogous to Gehenna, the figurative image of divine wrath exerted in penalty.

The expectation of the destruction of the world by a *diluvium ignis*—deluge of fire—analogous to the *diluvium aquæ*—deluge of water—was a traditional idea among the ancients, both

and the works that are therein shall be burned up. **11** *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be [t] in *all* holy conversation and godliness, **12** [u] Looking for and [2] hasting unto the coming of the day of

[t] 1 Pet. 1. 15.—[u] 1 Cor. 1. 7; Titus 2. 13.—[2] Or, *hasting the coming.*—[v] Psalm 50. 3;

poets and philosophers, especially the Stoics. We give passages from Wetstein. The philosopher Seneca says: "At that time the foam of the sea, released from laws, was borne on without restraint. By what cause, do you inquire? By the same cause by which the conflagration will take place when to God it seems good to establish a better order of things, and to close the old. Water and fire rule terrene things: from the former comes origination; from the latter, destruction."

Cicero says: "Our philosophers suppose that at last the whole world will take fire, when, the moisture being consumed, neither the earth can be nourished nor the air circulate, so that nothing will be left but fire; from which, again, under the animating power of God, a renovation of the earth will take place, and the same fair order will be reproduced."

Eusebius says: "It is the opinion of the Stoic philosophers, that all substance should go into fire, as a seed, and from it again should spring the same organization as before."

Lenormant, the eminent French archæologist and historian, (Contemporary Review, Nov. 1879,) says: "The result, then, of this long review authorizes us to affirm the story of the deluge to be a universal tradition among all the branches of the human race, with one exception, however, of the black. Now a recollection thus precise and concordant cannot be a myth voluntarily invented. No religious or cosmogonic myth presents this character of universality. It must arise from the reminiscence of a real and terrible event, so powerfully impressing the imagination of the first ancestors of our race as never to have been

God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall [v] be dissolved, and the elements shall [w] melt with fervent heat? **13** Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for [x] new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Isa. 34. 4.—[w] Micah 1. 4; verse 10.—[x] Isa. 65. 17; 66. 22; Rev. 21. 1. 27.

forgotten by their descendants. This cataclysm must have occurred near the first cradle of mankind, and before the dispersion of the families from which the principal races were to spring."

11. Two verses our apostle now interposes to warn his readers of the personal holiness they ought to maintain in view of so great a destruction. **Conversation**—Conduct.

12. **Looking for**—*Maintaining expectation of;* unlike the **scoffers,** who denied and forgot. **Hasting unto**—*Intensely earnest in regard to.* **Heavens**—The atmospheric elements. **Dissolved**—Decomposed. **Elements**—Material constituents. **Melt**—By calorical separation of particles.

13. **Nevertheless**—Our hopes do not, like the **scoffers',** go down with the old earth; our faith looks for the new. **According to his promise**—God's one great **promise** of eternal life and glory for the elect in Christ. All the prophecies of the Old Testament presuppose it; and the New Testament is one great expression of it. The phraseology, only, of Isa. lxv, 17, is used here to describe a greater renewal than Isaiah was enabled explicitly to express. **New heavens and a new earth**—Compare notes on Rev. xxi, 1. The language of St. John would seem to imply that the new is not to be made out of the substance of the old, but that it is to be wholly a new sphere. And the phraseology of Peter might naturally be construed in the same way. We might then suppose (according to our note on 1 Thess. iv, 17) that the new heavens and earth were the sphere formed of a portion of the departed energies of the old universe crystallized into a new and glorious world. And the second advent may take place when

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent [y] that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. **15** And account *that* [z] the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; **16** As also in all

y 1 Cor. 1. 8; 15. 58; Phil. 1. 10; 1 Thess. 3. 13; 5. 23.

z Rom. 2. 4; 1 Pet. 3. 20; verse 9.

the renewed sphere corresponding to our earth is, by such final crystallization, completed. Yet, on the other hand, the old traditions generally held that the new would be simply a transformation of the old, and such might seem the natural, but not necessary, impression derived from Paul's language, Romans viii, 18–23, where see note. A renovation of the same substance may be indicated by Peter's analogy of the flood, (verse 6,) but that seems rather adduced only as instance of a supernatural break of the ordinary course of events, and is applicable to either view.

On these points astronomy neither aids nor impedes us much. If we suppose a new sphere made from the old energies, such an event need not be supposed ever yet, in the physical history of the universe, to have been completed, at least within reach of the astronomer's glass. New stars have been supposed to be observed to come into existence, but that supposition was probably the result of inaccurate observation. Stars have been seen apparently in conflagration; so that a burning world is no unsupposable thing. Stars have been seen for a while in apparent conflagration, and then resuming a natural appearance; so that a burned and renewed world is not, astronomically, unthinkable. To the eye of the astronomer the conflagration of a star may look accidental, like the burning of a house. But to the Omniscient eye there is no accident. Every particle of the most confused masses is not only ruled by law, but taken into the divine plan. Pope has well said,

> "All nature is but art unknown to thee,
> All chance, direction which thou canst not see."

If human art can by divine provision overlay the potter's clay with a most beautiful enamel, surely divine art can enamel the earth, which has passed through the divine furnace, with a sublime perfection, fitting it for the dwelling-place of **righteousness.**

2. By the true interpretation of time in the prophecies of the second advent believers may be preserved from apostasy, and attain salvation, 14–18.

Whilst others wrest the apparent non-fulfilment of the immediateness of the second advent to their own apostasy, (especially as predicted in Paul's epistles,) you, being aware of the true interpretation, will rightly understand God's long-suffering, and may persevere unto salvation. Commentators seem not generally to have observed that Peter's intimation of difficulties of interpretation is really limited to this one point, namely, his using terms of immediacy in regard to the possibly very distant second advent.

14. **Wherefore**—In view of this presentation of the time and nature of the day of judgment. **Found of him**—Namely, at his glorious appearing.

15. **Longsuffering**—God's endurance of the world's wickedness and weakness. **Is salvation**—As of a single sinner God forbears for the sinner's good, so of the world. **Salvation**—The gathering of saved millions into glory is the very essence of God's patience through ages. **As...also**—In addition to my thus writing. **Paul**—A memorable mention of a **brother** apostle. **According . . . wisdom**—Whether **Paul** wrote clearly or obscurely, it was **according** to the measure of inspiration by God vouchsafed **unto him.** See notes on Matthew xxviii, 1, (introductory;) Acts xxvii, 22. **Written unto you**—Who is meant by this **you?** Plainly, not all Christians, but the particular body to whom Peter is writing. For this epistle written by Paul **unto you** is antithet-

his epistles, [a] speaking in them of these things; in which are some things [b] hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable [c] wrest, as *they do* also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. **17** Ye therefore, beloved, [d] seeing ye know *these things* before, [e] beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. **18** [f] But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. [g] To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

a Rom. 8. 19; 1 Cor. 15. 24; 1 Thess. 4. 15.—*b* 1 Kings 10. 1; Heb. 5. 11.—*c* Exodus 21. 2, 6; Deut. 16. 19; Psalm 56. 5; Hab. 1. 4.

d Mark 13. 23; chapter 1. 12.—*e* Eph. 4. 14; chapter 1. 10, 11; 2. 18.—*f* Eph. 4. 15; 1 Peter 2. 2.—*g* 2 Tim. 4. 18; Rev. 1. 6.

ical to **all his epistles** in next verse. Of **all his epistles** there was a single one written **unto you.** Now, Peter's first epistle was written (i, 1) to the Hebrew dispersion, and this second is written to the same readers, as appears by iii, 1, of this epistle. So i, 1, though addressing Christians, means the Hebrew Christians. This **you,** therefore, must mean the Hebrew part of the Christian Church. Paul's one epistle **unto you,** therefore, must have been the Epistle to the Hebrews. And, as we have shown in our Introduction to Hebrews, Peter's word, in verse 16, δυσνοητα, **hard-to-be-understood,** so corresponds to Hebrews v, 11, δυσερμήνευτος, hard-to-be-interpreted, as to leave little doubt of the real reference. In Hebrews such a passage as x, 37 might easily be *wrested* without Peter's rule of prophetic-time interpretation. **In all his epistles** we find such passages as 1 Cor. xv, 51, and 1 Thess. iv, 15, which last is explained by Paul himself. 2 Thess. ii, 1–5.

16. **These things**—The second advent and its apparently near approach. **Hard to be understood** — Without due explanation as to the law of prophetic time. **Unlearned** — Ignorant of the true law. **Unstable**—Fickle in moral character, and ready at any difficulty to waver. **Wrest** — Twist, as with a windlass or hand-screw. They so put their forcible screws on to the time-words in the predictions of the judgment day as to declare them unfulfilled, and to maintain that no judgment day will ever come, and that Christianity itself is a fiction. **Other scriptures** — The same unlearned and fickle perversity will find plenty of **other** difficulties in scripture to **wrest to their own destruction.** He who wants a cavil will never fail to find one. And here it is to be noted that Paul's epistles are ranked by Peter as **scriptures,** and are held by him to be authoritative **scriptures** for the Christian Church. Even so early as the writing of this epistle a canon of New Testament **scriptures** was recognised in the Church of these Hebrews, and St. Paul's writings were included in it with the express endorsement of St. Peter. **Destruction**—The same as the **perdition** of verse 7, and these apostates are of the same class as the **ungodly men** of that verse.

17. **Know...before**—The same as **knowing this first,** of verse 3; namely, the law by which the judgment-day time is to be interpreted. **Ye also**—Like the **scoffers** of verse 3.

18. **Grow**—Instead of apostatizing. **In grace**—The opposite of the fickleness, or **unstable,** of verse 16. **The knowledge** — The opposite of **unlearned** of verse 16. **To him be glory**—That is, to Christ; an attribute never ascribed in doxology to any creature in scripture. **Forever**—Greek, ἡμέραν αἰῶνος, day of perpetuity, perpetual day; a day without end; eternity.

INTRODUCTION

TO

ST. JOHN'S EPISTLES.

ST. JOHN'S EPHESIAN RESIDENCE.

A BRIEF biography of John we have prefixed to our notes on the Gospel of John, but as we approach his three Epistles and his Apocalypse some fuller view of the latter part of his career seems to be suitable. After the crucifixion he seems to have remained in Jerusalem for several years, doubtless making the city his residence, yet performing constant missionary tours in different parts of Syria, like that of Peter in Acts ix, 32. The last mention we find of his stay in Palestine is, in Paul's account of his own visit to the Council of Jerusalem, (Galatians ii, 1–10,) in which he found James, Peter, and John, apparent "pillars" of the Church. The order of names indicates the priority of James as official resident apostle at Jerusalem, and the inferiority of John as youngest, and as yet to attain his proper position. This was about the middle of the first century—some seventeen years after the crucifixion—at which point John had nearly fifty years, more or less, to live.

John may have gone to Ephesus immediately after the death of St. Paul, (A. D. 68,) to supply that metropolitan city with an apostolic superintendent; or he may have remained at Jerusalem until the approaching destruction of that city. There was a brief cessation of war, produced by the delay of Cestius Gallus's attack on Jerusalem, in which the Christian population, warned by our Saviour's memorable prediction, departed to Pella. Later than that John could scarce have remained. All Christian antiquity agrees in finding him at Ephesus through his later years; thence his writings are promulgated; and there he founded a school of apostolic Christian theology, marked by its peculiar traits, and distinguished by its eminent scholars and doctors. Of some of these we will give a brief account.

ST. IGNATIUS was St. John's younger contemporary and hearer; was ordained by him, it is said by Eusebius, Bishop of Antioch, as early as A. D. 69; and was renowned for his ardent devotion to, and heroic defence of, the cause of Christ. Ignatius held the episcopate to be

the strong bulwark of the Church against heresies and persecutions. The Emperor Trajan came to Antioch full of persecuting purpose, and Ignatius intrepidly sustained his responsible position by presenting himself as ready to be the chief martyr. The emperor ordered him to be conveyed by soldiers to Rome, there to be thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre. The probable date of his martyrdom was A. D. 115.

St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, will be noticed in our notes on the Apocalypse. But it is quite proper here to speak of a celebrated pupil of Polycarp's, and so, as we may call him, *grand-pupil* to St. John.

St. Irenæus was born about the same year that Ignatius was ordained bishop, and so previous to St. John's death. In his boyhood he attended the ministry of Polycarp at Smyrna. Of Polycarp, and of his descriptions of St. John, the youthful Irenæus was a profoundly interested hearer. We are able to give his own account of this period in a letter of his still extant, written to his friend Florinus, warning him against the doctrines of Valentinus, the heretic, to which he was inclined:—

> These opinions, Florinus, that I may speak in mild terms, are not part of sound doctrine; these opinions are not consonant with the Church, and involve their votaries in the utmost impiety; these opinions even the heretics beyond the Church's pale have never ventured to broach; these opinions those presbyters who preceded us, and who were conversant with the apostles, did not hand down to thee. For while I was yet a boy I saw thee in Lower Asia with Polycarp, distinguishing thyself in the royal court, and endeavoring to gain his approbation. For I have a more vivid recollection of what occurred at that time than of recent events, (inasmuch as the experiences of childhood, keeping pace with the growth of the soul, become incorporated with it,) so that I can even describe the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and discourse, his going out and his coming in, his general mode of life and personal appearance, together with the discourses which he delivered to the people; also how he would speak of familiar intercourse with John and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord, and how he would call their words to remembrance. . . . What I heard from him that wrote I, not on paper, but in my heart, and, by the grace of God, I constantly bring it fresh to my mind.

Irenæus became Bishop of Lyons, in Gaul, about A. D. 177. He is supposed to have been martyred A. D. 202. He was an eminent defender of apostolic doctrine, especially against the Gnostics. His extensive writings still remain, and are very valuable, both as exhibiting a view of the thought of his age, and as furnishing early evidence in regard to the authenticity of the books of the New Testament.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, was in earlier life, as Irenæus informs us, a hearer of St. John. From his own account we should infer that, while he had opportunities of listening to the apostle's public discourses, he had, perhaps by reason of extreme youth, little personal intimacy with him. He was deeply interested in obtaining from those who had heard the primitive "elders," or fathers of the Church, what they were personally heard to say. And St. John was one of

"the elders" about whose sayings he made diligent inquiry of other hearers than himself. He recorded these reminiscences, holding them to be more authentic than most written reports. These he published under the title of "Exegeses of our Lord's Oracular Sayings," a collection which Eusebius, who read them, pronounces to be eccentric in its character, and which the Church has not carefully preserved. Papias furnishes some of our earliest testimonies as to our canonical Gospels. He held a visionary expectation of Christ's immediate return to establish a millennial kingdom. He is supposed to have suffered martyrdom about fifty years after the death of St. John.

Nothing in Christian antiquity is more beautiful than the closing years of St. John in the metropolis of Asia Minor. He maintained the vigour of youth and manhood almost to the end of his life. That vigour was expended in apostolic visitation through the villages and cities of that sunny clime—founding Churches, ordaining ministries, rebuking errors and heresies, propagating the true apostolic tradition with a sure authority as an original disciple of the living Jesus. At home he would gladly indoctrinate the young who might be future teachers and preachers after his ascension. And, above all, it was his mission to write and publish his GOSPEL as the basis of historic Christian verity; his EPISTLES to affirm the genuine doctrine against surrounding errors; and his APOCALYPSE as the doctrinal and historic chart of the future Church. And as we have no express historic record as to their precise dates or chronological order of publication, we may assume that the order of time accorded with this natural order of thought. We suppose that he published his Gospel before his banishment to Patmos, which took place in the fifteenth year of Domitian's reign; that his exile lasted less than two years; and that he was restored to his Asian Churches at the death of Domitian and accession of Trajan. The learned commentator Lampe counts nineteen different opinions among scholars as to the years of John's life, varying from eighty-nine to one hundred and twenty years. His death probably took place in the third year of Trajan's reign, A. D. 101. It was thus his lot to complete the first Christian century, to be the last of the apostles, and to affix the last book to the New Testament canon.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

We have elsewhere spoken of the pre-eminent position of Ephesus as a great centre in Christian history. (Note on Acts xix, 1.) First founded as a Church by Paul in the meridian of his life, favoured with one of his most beautiful epistles, then ruled, at least for awhile, by the apostle's vicar, Timothy, it was afterward honoured with the presence and presiding authority of St. John, and thence handed over to a line of Christian bishops.

To an understanding of this epistle Paul's address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus is an important starting-point. Acts xx, 18–35. We must specially note his prophetic warning, that, after his departure, from the bosom of the Church itself grievous heretical wolves would arise, not sparing the flock. Next, written to this same Ephesus, his second letter to Timothy predicts more fully the same apostasies in the Church "in the last days." 2 Tim. iii, 1. This was penned just before Paul's death, and was his dying prophecy of the peculiar heresies marking the close of the apostolic century. If now we open the epistles of John, we shall find that he is in at least the early scenes of that apostasy itself. The antinomians, (we shall style them indifferently Nicolaitans or Gnostics,) as foretold by Paul, are infesting the Church, impugning the original doctrines of Christ, and introducing demoralizations threatening to overthrow Christianity in its commencing life. The primal dogma, which centred all evil in matter, imported from Eastern Asia, was working its poisonous effects. (See notes on Acts vii, 5 and viii, 9.) Either men, through moral abhorrence of matter, became ascetics, and thence arose a superstitious vegetarianism, celibacy, and monkish asceticism, or, professing that purified in soul by a mental knowledge of God they could abandon the body to any work, a gross licentiousness resulted, consecrated by a false profession.* The moral atmosphere of Ephesus, as well as of Asia and Syria generally, at this period, was tainted by these demoralizing dogmas, and called imperatively for a public manifesto from an orig-

* Wordsworth translates the following passage of "some of the Gnostics of the subapostolic age" from Irenæus, ii, 6, 2-4: "Animal men (ψυχικοὶ) are conversant only with animal things, (ψυχικὰ,) and have not perfect *gnosis;* and they describe *us* who *are* of the *Church* as such; and they say that as *we* are *only* such, *we* must do good works in order to be saved; but they assert that *they* themselves will be saved, not by *practice*, but because they are *spiritual* (πνευματικὰ) *by nature*, and that as gold, though mingled with mire, does not lose its beauty, so they themselves, though wallowing in the mire of carnal works, do not lose their own *spiritual* essence. And, therefore, though they eat things offered to idols, and are the first to resort to the banquets which the heathen celebrate in honour of their false gods, and abstain from nothing that is foul in the eyes of God or man, they say that they cannot contract any defilement from these impure abominations; and they scoff at us who fear God as silly dotards, and hugely exalt themselves, calling themselves *perfect*, and the elect *seed*."

inal apostle, stating the true Christian faith and ethic against this system of error and wickedness. As early as Simon Magus the germ of this antinomianism appears, (see our note Acts viii, 9,) and our John, indeed, there personally encountered it in Simon himself, and so was prepared for his present work. The work was mainly done in this First Epistle. How the apostle prosecuted the war, both in his private letters and his apostolic circuits, we ascertain by his two lesser epistles. His last words are found in his seven apocalyptic letters to the seven Asiatic Churches; and, indeed, the whole Apocalypse is a sequel to the Epistles, being a grand unfolding of the antichrist of St. John's day, (the elemental "many antichrists" of 1 John ii, 18,) in its stupendous developments in future history down to the final consummation.

In the midst of this atmosphere of doctrinal and ethical heresy, the purpose of our apostle in this epistle is to state the true doctrine and *morale* of Christ, both positively, in itself, and negatively, in its antagonism to surrounding error. And unless the antagonistic as well as positive phase be recognised, the reader will not take the full force, and sometimes not the true meaning, of the apostle's words. It is now quite customary, we think absurdly so, for commentators to say that John had "no polemic purpose" in this epistle. But certainly in stating the positive truth he seldom forgets to defy the counter untruth, and even to fasten a trenchant epithet upon its utterer. The word lie or liar occurs, as verb or noun, eight times in five chapters. The bad sayings of opponents, as we enumerate them, are quoted and condemned nine times. Then he expressly tells us, "These things have I written concerning *them that seduce you;*" and he soon after adds, in regard to an important statement, "Let no man deceive you." The opening paragraph is a bold assertion of his own original authority, and from beginning to end, we may say, there is a constant series of antithetic ideas, issues between the true view and the opposite error, very intensely stated, and, at first sight, apparently overstated. All this intensity arises not merely from his earnestness in behalf of doctrinal and narrative truth, but from the fact that he saw that the foundations of all true Christian purity were in the issue, and Christianity itself was at stake.

This great moral battle between Christianity and the heretical corruptions that not only threatened to ruin the Church, but showed themselves as the deepest degradations of our human nature, is presented in the later documents of the New Testament in two stages, namely: first, as foreseen and *predicted*, and, second, as *fulfilment* of these predictions. And this fact serves to fix the relative chronology of the two sets of documents. Earliest of the *predictions* (unless we include 2 Thess. ii, 3–9) was Paul's address to the Milesian elders, (Acts

xx, 29;) next, his Epistles to Timothy, (1 Tim. iv, 1–3; 2 Tim. iii, 1–5;) third, the second chapter of Peter's Second Epistle. The *fulfilments* are found in these three Epistles of John, in Jude, and in Rev. ii, 6, 14–16. A due reading of these passages in proper order will reveal a very powerful "polemic purpose" in the writers, the characters of the moral monsters against which young Christianity had to wage a war of extermination, and the chronological order of the documents which the war called out from the Church. In regard to these errorists, whether Gnostics or Nicolaitans, consult our notes on Acts vi, 5; viii, 9; xi, 19; 1 Cor. viii, 1; 2 Thess. ii, 7; 1 Tim. iv, 1–3; 2 Tim. vi, 20.

The appalling quality of these heresies was their threatening the foundations of Christian morals, and of all morals, by maintaining that there could be a perfect purity of soul in the midst of the most abominable practices. The heretics had formed a system that reconciled the antithesis between sanctity and depravity of life and conduct. They taught that *a man might be an outrageous violator of law, and yet a pure and holy saint.* The epistle is, therefore, a defence of Christian *purity from sin* against Gnostic *purity in sin.* The epistle, then, is one great antithesis. The apostle grounds our real purification from natural sin by the Spirit of God, through Christ's most real blood, producing a holiness the absolutely opposite of all sinful *practice*, the center of which holiness is LOVE—a divine love producing a unity between a perfectly pure God, a purified Church, and our purified soul; from which union with God results an eternal life here, to be perpetuated in eternity.

PLAN OF FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

INTRODUCTION—

Authority of the writer as an original witness of the living Word ..... i, 1–4

Opening summary of the epistle—Purity through Christ i, 5–10

I. THE CHRISTIAN (WHO KNOWETH GOD, VERSE 4) IS ONE WHO CONDEMNS, AND PURIFIES HIMSELF **from,** SINNING AND SIN; BUT THE CLAIMANT TO KNOWING GOD **in** SIN IS A FALSE PRETENDER... ii, 1–29

1. For the Christian's sin of infirmity Christ is a universal propitiation ..... ii, 1, 2

2. Yet for the claimant of divine fellowship the test is abstinence from all sin ..... ii, 3–14

3. So that we are not to love the godless and evanescent world ..... ii, 15–17

4. Nor accept the antichrists, whose coming marks a closing age ..... ii, 18–19

5. From which antichristic revolt you may be preserved by the purifying unction ..... ii, 20–29

(*Two interludes—verses* 7, 8 *and* 12–14*—interposing statements of the writer's purpose and feeling.*)

II. OUR REGENERATE SONSHIP—ITS GLORY AND REQUISITE PURITY, IN CONTRAST WITH THE (GNOSTIC) FALSE REGENERATION IN IMPURITY iii, 1–24

1. Present and future prospective glory of our sonship iii, 1, 2

2. Purification from actual sin the test of our sonship .. iii, 3–10

3. A purification manifested in love to our brother and actual benefaction ..... iii, 11–18

4. And evidenced to ourselves by assurance through faith in Christ and witness of the Spirit given unto us .... iii, 19–24

III. THE TEST OF THE ANTICHRISTIC SPIRITS AND FALSE PROPHETS GONE ABROAD ..... iv, 1–21

1. The three condemnatory tests — non-confession of a human Jesus, worldliness, and the not hearing apostolic testimony ..... iv, 1–6

2. The one confirmatory test—love—the threefold love between God, the believer, and the brethren ..... iv, 7–21

IV. POWER OF THIS REGENERATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST ..... v, 1–21

1. Its effects—love, spontaneous obedience, victory ..... v, 1–5

2. And Christ, divinely attested by the threefold witnesses, is supremely worthy of faith ..... v, 6–10

3. The results of which faith are eternal life and answered prayer ..... v, 11–17

4. Summarizing conclusion, with final admonition ..... v, 18–21

THE

FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

THAT [a]which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes [b]which we have looked upon, and [c]our hands have handled, of the

[a] John 1. 1; chap. 2. 13.—[b] John 1. 14; 2 Pet. 1. 16; chap. 4. 14.—[c] Luke 24. 39; John 20. 27.

CHAPTER I.

EXORDIUM.—**The writer's authority as an original personal witness, 1-4.**

1. **That**—A highly inverted sentence embracing the three verses. The commencing verb is in the third verse, **declare we.** Of this verb the **which,** thrice expressed and once implied in the first verse, are the objectives; and the true order is this: **We declare unto you that** (real, bodily personality) **of the Word of life which was from the beginning, which . . . heard, which . . . seen, which . . . looked upon, and** *which* **our hands have handled.** The reason why St. John uses the neuter **that which,** (which might as well have been the English compound relative *what,*) instead of the masculine *him whom,* is because the heretics questioned not that *he,* Christ, really appeared, but questioned his nature. He was, they said, a docetic, incorporeal phantom; or the Jesus was a mere man upon whom the superhuman Christ descended and rested. **From the beginning**—This phrase, in application to his readers, St. John uses in ii, 7, 13, 24; iii, 11 of the beginning of the preaching of the gospel; but in iii, 8 of an ante-mundane beginning of Satan. And so here we have the same ante-mundane **beginning** as in the first verse of St. John's Gospel, where see notes. The same is the ante-mundane existence of the "Son" in Heb. i, 3, where see notes. **We**—John and the other apostles. St John's **we** (verse 3) includes himself personally, and all the apostles representatively, whose office it was to be *witnesses* of what Jesus said, and did, and was. Note on Luke i, 2. **We,** apostles, are original authorities; whereas the heretics are strangers, basing their speculations on third or fourth hand testimonies, supplemented by their own fancies. And as **we** saw his miracles, heard his own account of himself, and **handled** his very physical body, so our account is original and ultimate, the first and last word. **Have**—The Greek uses the perfect tense of the first two verbs. **have heard** and **have seen;** but the aorist, without the **have,** of **looked upon** and **handled.** This is a significant change of tense, lost in our English translation. It indicates that the apostles are persons who **have seen** and **have heard,** and that remains in its effect the permanent fact. But they also specifically and at the moment **looked upon,** that is, contemplated and deeply studied, the inner nature, and also **felt,** so as to deeply cognize the bodily substance of the Lord. This specialty is increased from the fact that the first was done with **our** bodily **eyes,** and in no dream, and the last with our **hands,** the surest instruments of touch. Though he was **from the beginning,** and was truly **the Word of life,** he submitted himself to our most bodily perceptions that we might most surely **declare** his determinate personality. **Of**—This preposition does not here represent, as usually, the Greek genitive, but the preposition περί, in the sense of *pertaining* or *belonging to;* as in Luke xxii, 37; Phil. i, 27; Col. iv, 8. **The Word of life**—That **Word** whose property was

Word of life; 2 (For [d]the life [e]was manifested, and we have seen *it*, [f]and bear witness, [g]and show unto you that eternal life, [h]which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 [i]That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly [k]our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things write we unto you, [l]that your joy may be full.

d John 1. 4; 11. 25; 14. 6.——*e* 1 Tim. 3. 16; chap. 3. 5.——*f* Acts 2. 32.——*g* Chap. 5. 20.——*h* John 1. 1, 2.——*i* Acts 4. 20.——*k* John 17. 21; 1 Cor. 1. 9; chap. 2. 24.——*l* John 15. 11; 16. 24; 2 John 12.

life so essentially that he truly called himself "the Life." "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." John i, 4, where see notes. These first three verses are an essential reference to John's Gospel, especially its first four verses. They evince that both Epistle and Gospel were by the same author; and John truly bases the doctrines of this Epistle upon the facts and declarations of the Gospel.

2. **For**—St. John interrupts himself with this parenthesis to guard us against supposing, for a moment, that his material phrases overlook the true eternal spiritual nature of Christ. He holds that the apostles **handled** that eternal **Word,** existing even **from the beginning,** when they touched his bodily person. **Word of life,** I say, for that essential **life** which he originally *was* became corporeally realized in him to whom we **bear witness. That eternal life**—A **life** which has neither beginning of existence nor end. And this light was so **manifested** that we saw it and touched it as a human person. **With the Father**—Just as in John i, 1, the "Word" was "with God."

3. **That which ... seen ... heard declare we**—St. John resumes the connexion interrupted by the parenthesis by bringing down and repeating **that which** of verse 1, to make them the objective of **declare.** It should be noted how earnestly and persistently he repeats the evidence of his senses in perfectly knowing Jesus. This is because he makes that absolute ocular and tactual ascertainment of Jesus the foundation of his authority for the announcements of doctrine in this epistle. Standing on this foundation as an original bodily witness, he will not argue, prove, and refute by a series of logical inferences; but he will **declare**—will dogmatically *pronounce* —what the truth in Jesus is. He pronounces because he knows. **Unto you**—Primarily, the public mind of Ephesus; inferentially, the whole Christian world, and the whole world that should be Christian. **Fellowship**—That is, communion, common participation. It is a **life** that **we declare,** and the purpose of our declaring is, that the universal **you** may be common sharers in that **life. Our fellowship is with the Father, and ...Christ**—The receiver of the **witness** shares not barely the truth, but the mystical participation of a common **life** with God and Jesus. The nature of that communion, and how it is allowed and retained, and how the opposite sin and error are to be avoided, are the sum total of this epistle.

4. **Joy...full**—And the object of so certifying his readers of this glorious truth is their **joy.** If all doubt is removed, and they know on his authority from Christ himself that this **fellowship with God** is a reality, a **joy full** and inspiring will fill their hearts and strengthen their souls for all goodness.

A preliminary summary of the entire epistle, 5-10.

Our apostle now summarizes the substance of his **message** or epistle, by unfolding the true Christian doctrine of purity *from* sin in opposition to the errorists' theory of purity *in* sin. God is absolute purity, and the only method of coming into oneness with his purity is, by absolute confession of sins, repentance, the atonement, the pardon, and the sanctification. Every other method is a fatal falsehood.

5 [m]This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that [n]God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **6** [o]If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, [p]we lie, and do not the truth: **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and [q]the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. **8** [r]If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, [s]and the

m Chap. 3. 11.—*n* John 1. 9; 8. 12; 9. 5; 12. 35, 36.—*o* 2 Cor. 6. 14; chap. 2. 4.—*p* John 8. 44, 55; 1 Tim. 4. 2.—*q* 1 Cor. 6. 11; Eph. 1. 7; Heb. 9. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 19; chap. 2. 2; Rev. 1. 5.—*r* 1 Kin. 8. 46; 2 Chr. 6. 36; Job 9. 2; 15. 14; 25. 4; Prov. 20. 9; Eccl. 7. 20; Jas. 3. 2.—*s* Chap. 2. 4.

5. **This . . . message**—**Message** is the noun of which **declare,** or announce, in verse 3, is the verb, and includes the entire doctrine of the epistle. **Heard...and declare** from Christ **unto you. God is light**—As perfect universal truth and purity; yet not universal so but that there is an opposite **darkness.** Yet the **darkness** is not **in him,** but is the perfect reverse of him. Truth and falsehood, love and malignity, light and darkness, are the intensest possible opposites. They may mix, but cannot be identified.

6. **If we say**—The errorists who **say** this are never, in this epistle, far out of John's sight. Thrice in this brief *summary* does he allude to them with an **if we say. Fellowship with him...walk in darkness**—The vital heresy of the errorists; claiming that divine communion is perfectly compatible with wicked conduct; professing that they "know God," and are thereby relieved from all obligation to do right. **We lie**—It is a guilty error, not a mere mistake. **We say** it in order to claim holiness, and yet indulge in sin. **Do not**—Practise not. **The truth**—The moral **truth** of the divine commandments reproduced in the gospel.

7. **Walk in the light**—A beautiful image of a true and holy life. It implies purity, truth, transparency; and all these are as **light,** identified in thought with the blessed nature and substance of God himself. **Fellowship**—I, **we,** and God have a common **fellowship** and threefold oneness in this one common **light.** We are all **light** unified. **Blood...cleanseth**—We must beware of the great error of making this wonderful image of being *washed and cleansed in the blood of Jesus* a literality. There is no vat of actual **blood** into which our bodies or souls are plunged. And there is no literal *cleansing.* This glowing imagery so reigns in parts of the New Testament, especially in John's writings, as well as in our sermons and hymns, that many Christians pass their whole lives without once looking through the figure into the literal. They are thence liable to be deceived by arguments based on the figure which have no base in the literal. This figure simply means, *first,* that our sins are, upon our faith, forgiven us on account of the death of Christ; and, *second,* that the Holy Spirit being given in consequence of that death, does, in the completeness of that work, so strengthen and energize our moral and spiritual powers that we are able to reject temptation and avoid sin; and just in the measure and fulness of that power in exercise is the entireness of our sanctification. When that divinely-bestowed power is complete, the sanctification is entire. But it is to be noted, that while our pardon is *immediate* from Christ's **blood,** our sanctification is *mediate* through the Spirit purchased by his blood. We are justified by Christ; we are sanctified by the Spirit. **All sin**—That is, from **all** guilt and practice of **sin,** not from all inward liability or tendency, so but that apostasy is possible.

8. **If we say**—As the Nicolaitans (or antinomian Gnostics) do. See notes on Rev. ii, 15, and Introduction to this epistle. **Have no sin**—Whether **we say** by denying we have done wrong, or by affirming that no wrong we commit is **sin. Deceive ourselves**—We are not merely mistaken or deceived, but we are also our own deceivers.

truth is not in us. **9** [t]If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to [u]cleanse us from all unrighteous-

[t] Psa. 32. 5; Prov. 28. 13.

[u] Verse 7; Psa. 51. 2.

We are the deceived and deceivers in one. We have the misfortune to be mistaken, and the guilt of framing the deception by which we mistake. **The truth**—It is not said that there is not **truth** in us, for all men have some truth. But **the** divine **truth** of pure **fellowship** with God through Christ is not **in us**, the only **truth** by which we are saved. Huther and Alford maintain that this saying, **we have no sin**, refers even to the true Christian. But, 1. Surely of a Christian who is by forgiveness freed from all guilt of **sin**, and by sanctification cleansed from **all unrighteousness**, it may be truly said in an evangelical sense that he **has no sin.** God imputes to him **no sin.** And to say that such a non-imputation to the Christian of sin makes God **a liar**, is, to say the least, very severe language. 2. Very plainly, the apostle is showing how the sinner may come into fellowship with the divine **light.** He tells such sinner that it is not by denying his **sins**, but by confessing them, that he can become right. The **deceive ourselves** refers to the man, therefore, before justification. 3. But in truth, the four instances in this chapter of **if we say**, are quotations of the language of Nicolaitan antinomians, who maintained that however bad their conduct they were still sinless.

9. **If**—In verse 7 St. John, beginning with the final result of unity with the divine **light**, ends with the instrument by which that unity is accomplished, namely, Christ. He now states the condition, once for all, by which that instrumentality becomes available, namely, reliant confession of our sins in view of the **blood.** That is, the flinging ourselves as confessed sinners upon Christ and his propitiation for pardon and purity. **Confess our sins**—Confess not only that we have done wrong, but that all our wrong-doings are **sins.** St. John, in specifying the faith-condition of salvation, emphasizes *confession*, because the uttered denial of **sins**, even though they committed misdeeds, was the fatal error of his opponents. That confession, however, includes a faith in view of the atonement and justification for which the confession is made. And this faith-confession, it must never be forgotten, underlies this whole epistle, as it does the whole gospel. **He**—God; who is the pardoner of **sins**, as Christ is the mediator of the pardon. **Faithful**—As having promised. No confessor need ever doubt the divine trueness. Or, we may say that pardon, justification, as the invariable sequent of true faith-confession, is the *law* of God's spiritual kingdom, and to it he will be **faithful. Just**—But in what sense can God be called **just** in forgiving the confessor? Not, certainly, because justice requires that a transgressor should be forgiven because he is penitent. No human or divine law holds a guilty man to become innocent because he repents. Indeed, true repentance acknowledges the permanent justice of penalty. God is called **just** in forgiving in this passage because the atonement makes satisfaction, so that God can be "*just*, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii, 26. Alford is strenuous in maintaining that such an idea does not fairly lie in the present current of thought. But Huther well remarks, that "God punishes as **just**, but he also blesses as **just**, and, indeed, the aim of realizing his kingdom is, that he should assign victory to goodness over badness." **Forgive**—Forgiveness holds the transgressor constructively as if he had never sinned, so far as penalty is concerned. **Sins**—Transgressions of God's law in thought, word, or act, as well as those permanent *states* of mind voluntarily retained adverse to the law. These are pardoned in our justification. **Cleanse us**—Under the image that **unrighteousness** (that is, an inward preference for that which violates the

ness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

law) is an *impurity* impregnating our being, the **blood**, through the Spirit, is said to **cleanse** the impurity away. By the Spirit, that is, the love of God is poured into the soul, and the love of the unlawful is neutralized by the power of that holy affection. Yet our free agency for sin, our sensitivities to temptation, our need of vigilant exertion of power over sin, our capabilities of apostasy, are never removed until we attain paradise.

The distinction between the **forgive** and the **cleanse** should be carefully retained. Forgiveness removes guilt and penalty for past sins; sanctification inspires to future sinlessness. One looks back, and the other looks forward. One says, "Thy sins be forgiven thee;" the other says, "Go, sin no more." A father may forgive a wicked son, and the son remain as wicked as before. But when our heavenly Father pardons us, he breathes into our hearts a spirit of obedience, which, if we obey, we never need incur his displeasure.

10. This concluding verse is added, as parallel and completing to verse 8, in order to emphasize the fact that not only is the denial of **sin** as a state, but of sin as an actual commission and practice in the past, flagrantly false. **Have not sinned**—The applying this to the Christian (as Alford and Huther) is, as above on verse 8, clearly erroneous. If the supposition be that the Christian says, I **have not sinned** since my conversion, no sensible Christian ever said that, and the admonition is absurd. If it be, I **have not sinned** in a particular case, it may be true. Clearly, John is laying the foundation of conversion of sinners to Christ in deep confession of sin both of character and act. **Make him a liar**—For both the universal condemnation of men and their universal redemption through Christ, is based upon the assumption that all men, of full responsible age and powers, **have sinned.**

CHAPTER II.

MY little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin

CHAPTER II.

I. THE TEST OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN GNOSTIC, OR ONE "WHO KNOWETH GOD," (verse 3,) IS HIS CONDEMNATION OF, AND SEPARATION FROM, SINNING AND SIN; THE GNOSTIC CLAIMANT TO A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN SIN IS A FALSE PRETENDER, 1–29.

1. For the Christian's sin of infirmity Christ is a universal propitiation, 1, 2.

1. **My little children**—This is John's opening appellative for his entire audience on rising to speak; or, rather, commencing to write. Though a *cœlebs*, (but see note on 2 John 13,) as tradition generally affirms, he is a paternal model. To the venerable age of our apostle his audience at Ephesus, although **fathers, young men,** and **children** (verse 13) in comparison with each other, were all **children, little children,** grandchildren. Hence the tradition that his last preaching words in old age were, "Little children, love one another." See our vol. ii, p. 225. **These things**—Bengel refers **these things** to what follows, Grotius to the preceding, while most commentators refer it to the last verses, 8–10. But as we view 5–10 to be a summary of all the epistle following, we refer it to both the past and the following, both being the same. **Sin not**—The main aim of the epistle being to show the incompatibility of *sinning as an actual practice*, or *sin as a permanent state*, with the divine **fellowship** or *communion*. **And**—Rather, *yet*. **If**—So liable is even the Christian to transgression that provision must be made for its occurrence. **Any man**—Among you; and so, inferentially, among mankind. **Sin**—In spite of his general purpose and rule of life to live above **sin.** The difference between the **sin** of the Christian and that of the Gnostic is, that the former is struggled against, condemned, and repented of by the man, while the latter is freely indulged, and maintained as right and

not. And if any man **sin**, [a] we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: **2** And [b] he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but [c] also for *the sins of* the whole world.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his com-

a Romans 8. 34; 1 Timothy 2. 5; Hebrews 7. 25; 9. 24.—*b* Romans 3. 25; 2 Corinthians 5. 18; chapter 1. 7; 4. 10.—*c* John 1. 29; 4. 42; 11. 51, 52; chapter 4. 14.

suitable to be practised in the future. **An advocate**—An attorney, or responsible speaker for us in court. The term implies that the **man** is now a culprit on trial before the **Father** for his **sin**, and **Christ** is his lawyer to plead for him. The image is borrowed from Roman law, no such officer as **an advocate** being known to the Old Testament. When brought under the Romans, the Jews and other conquered peoples were obliged to engage Roman lawyers to plead their cases. Such **an advocate** was Tertullus, in Acts xxiv, 1, where see notes. The Greek word here for **advocate** is *παράκλητος, paraclete*, a word applied, in its original sense of consoler or "comforter," to the Holy Spirit. **The righteous**—The sinless One, who, having no transgressions of his own, is able to plead with just influence before the court of the Most Holy, where we dare not ourselves appear.

2. **Ours only...whole world**—The heart of our apostle is too expansive to limit the grace of the Redeemer to a select number. Christ is a race Redeemer, a world-Saviour. The interpretation that strives against language so rich to force a limit upon it, dishonours Christ and dishonours itself. Such is the perversity of Calvin's words quoted disapprovingly by Alford: "Under **all** he does not comprehend reprobates; but designates those who are yet to believe and who are scattered through the various regions of **the world.**" Such a meaning of the word **world** has no instance in Scripture; for the word is more apt to be used, especially by John, to signify the **world** of unbelievers. In fact, the very purpose of John here is, to *deny* and repudiate a limited atonement. Beautiful and true are the words of Bengel: "So wide as sin extends does the propitiation extend."

2. Yet for the claimant of the divine purity the test is abstinence from all sinning, 3-14.

It might at first be supposed that a ready **advocate** and **propitiation** for the believer's sins might furnish easy license for sin. And separating that fact from its proper conditions, one may abuse it for antinomianism. St. Paul met the same objection, that we may abound in sin that the grace of propitiation may abound, in the same way as John does here. Rom. vi, 1, where see notes. Our adherence to Christ is incompatible with a purpose to abound in sin.

3. **We know him**—The Gnostics claimed to **know** God, and thereby to be free to all bodily sin. See note on 2 Thess. ii, 7. But the criterion of a true Christian Gnostic is his keeping God's commandments. The character of the other sort of Gnostic is sharply pronounced in next verse. This *knowing* him is deeper than a mere historical perception of him. It requires that we should **know that we know him,** by knowing that it makes us **keep his commandments.** It is a knowledge which descends from the head into the heart, and runs along the nerves and muscles, making us think, and feel, and act rightly. Bengel notices the climax in the three verses 4–6 expressed in **know, in him,** and **abide in him.** These three he designates beautifully as cognition, communion, and constancy. No other **know him** has any saving value—but the contrary. The more we **know him** without this test, the more our condemnation. In the verses previous to the first *interlude* (verse 7) the sinlessness of the true Gnostic is designated as keeping **commandments;** in verses before the second *interlude* (verse 12) under the images of **love** and **light.**

mandments. **4** [d]He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, [e]is a liar, and the truth is not in him. **5** But [f]whoso keepeth his word, [g]in him verily is the love of God perfected: [h]hereby know we that we are in him. **6** [i]He that saith he abideth in him [k]ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. **7** Brethren, [l]I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment [m]which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. **8** Again, [n]a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him

d Chap. 1. 6; 4. 20.—*e* Chap. 1. 8.—*f* John 14. 21, 23.—*g* Chap. 4. 12.—*h* Chap. 4. 13.—*i* John 15. 4, 5.

k Matt. 11. 29; John 13. 15; 1 Peter 2. 21.—*l* 2 John 5.—*m* Chap. 3. 11; 2 John 5.—*n* John 13. 34; 15. 12.

4. **He that saith**—Note on i, 6. John has the antagonist, as usual, in view. He affirms the positive truth, and negatives the counter untruth. **I know him**—And **know** that I am safe in transgression either through him or without him. **A liar**—A guilty falsifier of the very foundation of redemption, that he may indulge in breaking the divine **commandments. The truth**—Note on i, 8.

5. **But**—Returning to the affirmative in earnest repetition, with emphasis on **verily** and **know. Keepeth**—By not only remembering, but obeying. **Love of God perfected**—By being brought into full force and action. **Perfected**—In the same degree that it is effective in making us keep **his word. Hereby**—Referring to **keepeth his word. Know we**—We do most completely **know** that we **know**...**him**, or (what is the same thing, and more) are **in him. In him**—In Christ, by communion, and thereby in God.

6. **Abideth**—The summit of the grades, **know him, in him,** and **abideth in him.** This **abiding** is Christian perseverance — reverse of apostasy. **He walked**—The word **he** has thus far in the paragraph been the Greek *αὐτος*; here it is *ἐκεῖνος*. From this change Alford infers that the first refers to God, (note on verse 3,) and this last to Christ. But both refer to Christ; the former as our divine **advocate** and **propitiation** before the **Father** in heaven, (verses 1, 2,) the latter to the man Jesus as he **walked** on earth for our example.

7. *First interlude.* Twice in this chapter St. John interrupts the current of thought in order to express the personal purpose and feeling of his writing. Other writers would have done this at the introduction; but he has begun with the full propounding of his subject, and his personal references come in parenthetically by the way. This *interlude* meets the objection that his doctrine is a novelty. The **commandment** is not, as some think, simply the law of brotherly love, (though verses 10, 11 show that to be included,) but the entire preceding injunction of 3–6, requiring our knowing and abiding in our great propitiation—that is, in the divine **fellowship** and perfect love summarized in i, 6, 7. This was no **new commandment;** indeed, they had **heard** it **from the beginning;** that is, from the first announcement of Christ's gospel to them. This newly delivered injunction is **the** same old **word** they had ever **heard,** even **from the beginning** of their Christian knowledge.

8. **Again**—That is, under another view of the subject, the **commandment** is **new.** It is, on opposite sides, at the same time both **old** and **new.** Even when first preached through Christ it was **old,** both as a natural and eternal divine obligation, and as a record in the Hebrew revelation; and it was **new** by the revelation of our *example*, **propitiation,** and **advocate,** Jesus Christ; and this newness **is** a **true** thing both in the Christ and in the believer—**in him and in you.** It is **true in** Christ as unfolding a new force in the law of love; it is **true in you** as being pledged by your interest in **the propitiation** (verse 2) to perfect obedience to, and oneness

and in you: [o] because the darkness is past, and [p] the true light now shineth. **9** [q] He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. **10** [r] He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and [s] there is none [1] occasion of stumbling in him. **11** But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and [t] walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. **12** I write unto you, little children, because [u] your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. **13** I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him [v] *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, [w] young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because

o Rom. 13. 12; Eph. 5. 8; 1 Thess. 5. 5, 8.—*p* John 1. 9; 8. 12; 12. 35.—*q* 1 Cor. 13. 2; 2 Pet. 1. 9; chap. 3. 14, 15.—*r* Chap. 3. 14.—*s* 2 Pet. 1. 10.

1 Greek, *scandal.*—*t* John 12. 35.—*u* Luke 24. 4, 7; Acts 4. 12; 10. 43; 13. 38; chap. 1. 7.—*v* Chap. 1. 1.—*w* Joel 2. 28; Zech. 9. 17; Titus 2. 6.

with, Christ. **The darkness** once shading that law of love **is past** by this revelation of Christ; and **the true light now shineth** by which the force of that law, or **commandment,** is made luminous. The **old commandment** is, therefore, a **new** one.

9. The verses 9–11 are a resumption of the thread of thought from verse 6, after the parenthetic 7, 8. **In the light**—Namely, **the true light** of the last verse, Jesus the propitiator. It is under the imagery of **light** and **darkness,** now, (in 9–11,) that the antithesis between the Christian and the errorist is presented. The **light** is the emblem of truth and purity blended in one; the **darkness** is the unity of error and sin. **Hateth his brother**—His **brother,** in the various degrees in which that title can be applied to his fellow-man. Love of various degrees and kinds is due to the **brother** in each sense, as fellow-believer, as child of the same human parent, as child of the same all-Father. As John is expounding the **fellowship** of the believer with Christ and God, it is in the first sense that the word **brother** is here primarily used. **In darkness**—Destitute of the divine light and love. He is spiritually dark and cold. **Until now**—How much soever he may have professed to be in the **light.**

10, 11, restate strongly the antithesis between fraternal love and hatred; presenting it as the prominent test of our moral condition.

12–14. *Second interlude.* See note, verse 7. **Little children** here, as in verse 1, means our apostle's *entire audience.* And the use of the term seems to have suggested forthwith the purpose of addressing the three ages—fathers, middle-aged, and youths—and by way of emphasis he goes over the triad twice. The **little children** of verse 12 is a different word from the **little children,** or *youths,* of verses 13 and 18.

12. **I write**—*I am writing.* While I write, my mind surveys your different ages of natural and Christian life blended in one. **Sins are forgiven**—The entire Church is addressed on the common basis of being justified Christians.

13. **Fathers**—Some of them, perhaps, remembered when Paul and Apollos first preached in Ephesus. **Known...beginning**—When Ephesus first received the Gospel. As if this were of itself enough, he repeats precisely the same words to the **fathers** in the second triad in the next verse. **Young men**—Thus the three ages must be held to cover the whole of life. The Greek word extends to forty years of life and over. But an old man, like our apostle, makes his youngers younger than they are, and these **young men** were doubtless **young** until they became *old.* The term would be rightly understood of middle-age. **Because**—To each age he gives its suited motto. In next triad the **young men** have a fuller certificate. They are **strong,** are firm and permanent, **have overcome** the devil. They may not be reposing in their laurels, like the **fathers,** but they are

ye have known the Father. **14** I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because [x] ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15 [y] Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. [z] If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

x Eph. 6. 10.—y Rom. 12. 2.

z Matt. 6. 24; Gal. 1. 10; James 4. 4.

robust, and are in fact victors in their still enduring battle. **Little children**—*Youths* would seem to be too old a term to be equivalent to the Greek, unless we remember the above-named habit of the aged man. The word is plainly intended to cover all less than the **young**, or rather middle-aged, **men.** And both here and in ver. 18 the knowledge imputed to them is too high for a mere child. **Known the Father**—Namely, the divine **Father** of all; who is truly known through Jesus Christ. They were the true Gnostics.

14. **Have written**—Rather, *I wrote.* A change of tense from the **I write** of the last verse. Yet the meaning is probably about the same. The epistolary aorist tense assumed the standpoint of the reading of the epistle, as if saying, while you read this, know that I *wrote* thus and so. Nevertheless this past tense may be more emphatic than the present. The third address of this triad **little children** occurs in ver. 18, where suitable matter occurring reminds the apostle that they should be addressed.

3. So that we must not love a godless and evanescent world, 15–17.

This self-purification involves a withdrawal of our fellowship from the world in its impure conditions.

15. **Love**—Resumption of the topic of **love** from verse 11. To that verse John had impressively taught us to **love** our brother; he will now teach us what **not** to **love**. **The world**—There are aspects in which **the world** should be loved. 1. With a love of affection which desires its well-being not only as a whole, but for the beings that inhabit it. Even "God so loved the world;" and so requires us to love; and this includes the love of our brother in verses 3–14. 2. We are to love in due degree the enjoyments which God has provided for our rational natures. We may enjoy life as a scene of duties, mercies, and gracious gifts of God. Yet are we so to enjoy as to not **love** it in any superiority over, or competition with, that better world for which it is our preparatory. He who enjoys this world in accordance with a constant faith in a higher and holy world to come "makes the best of both worlds." A two-fold happiness makes him both fearless and doubly cheerful. But there are three aspects in which the world is not to be loved. 1. As a material solid residence it is under divine reprobation, and is vanishing and doomed, and if we bury ourselves in its materialities we are liable to be doomed with it. 2. As a mass of unregenerate beings, to whom, however we may wish well, yet we know that it "lieth in wickedness," and must not sympathize with its unregeneracy. 3. As a mass of depravities and errors, of immoralities and false doctrines, there is a world of thought and character for which we must have no moral approving love. These are unfolded in the triad of the next verse. In these aspects **the love of the world** is incompatible with **the love of the Father.** The errorist may believe that his lawless appetites for **the world** are at one with **the Father**; the Christian knows better. Of these three the first is most properly **the world. Love of the Father**—The word **Father** here, as in verse 1, designates God the Father in his relation to the Son, and so as head of the system of salvation. The **love of the Father** is, then, our **love** for God as the prime source of our salvation, the author of the blessed heaven, the **Father** of Christ. It is the **love** inspired by the Spirit in consequence of our faith in Christ.

16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, [a]and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. **17** And [b]the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

18 [c]Little children, [d]it is the last time: and as ye have heard that

a Eccles. 5. 11.—*b* 1 Cor. 7. 31; James 1. 10; 4. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 24.—*c* John 21. 5.—*d* Heb. 1. 2.

16. **All that is in the world**—In this **world,** as beheld by faith in the light of the better world, the following three classes of **things** comprehend **all. Lust**—In the Greek the term is capable of designating a good *desire;* but it derives from the context a bad sense. Our *desires* are all good when fixed in the right degree on the right thing. When fixed upon wrong objects, or in excessive degree on right objects, our *desires* become **lust. Lust of the flesh**—That is, **lust** proceeding from our animal appetites, alimentary and sexual. Rightly regulated, these appetites are right; unregulated, they are *lusts.* **Of the eyes**—Inordinate desires for getting all our **eyes** can see; the lawless indulgence of the possessory desires; greed for wealth, prompting to overreaching, to breach of trust, to gambling, plunder, and robbery. **Pride of life**—Tawdry love of display, selfish ambition for rank, power, and governmental conquest. To draw the line where the proper use of worldly things is divided from its abuse is a most important office of Christian ethics. **Not of the Father**—Who has made a better world for us, and makes it ours through his Son. **Of the world**—In contrast with his high and holy **world,** wherein dwelleth righteousness.

17. **Passeth away**—It is transitory. It **passeth away** from the grasp of earth's successive and dying generations. Its fashions and phases, its crises and epochs, are perpetually undergoing changes and revolutions. **Lust thereof**—Our pursuits and passions are as transitory as **the world**—neither is worthy so much excitement. Tranquil Christian life, fixing its eye on a heavenly future, ready for suffering or duty or enjoyments as this brief scene requires, and just as ready to leave at any moment, is safest and far the happiest. It is thus we can make the best of both worlds. **Abideth forever**—In this changing state of things every thing goes under save the man **of God.** The wicked go down to everlasting death; the objects of human **lust** perish and go into other forms; the earth will dissolve, the sun be extinguished, but **he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.** Most ample reason is here against **love** of **the world.**

4. Nor must we accept the many antichrists whose coming marks the closing age, 18, 19.

18. **Little children**—The third in the second triad of ages, commenced but unfinished in verse 14. It now occurs because our apostle is about to mention a **last time** through which the younger portion of his audience will have passed and beheld its results. **The last time**—Literally, *a last hour.* It is in the Greek without the definite article, like similar phrases in 1 Tim. iv, 1, 2 Tim. iii, 1, (where see notes,) which indicate *a* closing period, (namely, of the apostolic age,) rather than *the* close of earthly time. The absence of the article does not, apart from the context, fully prove that the reference is not to the second advent; for in 1 Pet. i, 5 the second advent is unquestionably designated as *a final period,* and in Jude 18, it is called *a last time.* The second advent is of course *a* last hour, but *a* last hour is with no certainty *the* second advent See note on 2 Peter iii, 3. It is by the context that the phrase here is fixed to mean *a last hour* rather than *the last hour. A* last hour bears the same relation to *the* last hour that the **many** elemental **antichrists** bear to the **antichrist.** Just as these **many antichrists** were typical of our final **antichrist,** of whom the readers had **heard,** so this *last hour* was typical of that **last day** of which they had learned. To make St. John

[e] antichrist shall come, [f] even now are there many antichrists; where-

[e] 2 Thess. 2. 3, &c.; 2 Pet. 2. 1; chap. 4. 3.

[f] Matt. 24. 5, 24; 2 John 7.

say the close of the world is attested by the presence of *the* antichrist because there are now **many antichrists** is to make him reason inconsequently. These typical antichrists can only be adduced to prove a typical **last** hour. Huther incorrectly makes the apostle intimate that the **many antichrists** *preceded* the **antichrist** as immediate forerunner; but there is no reference in any word of the apostle to *time*, but to the relative *character*. Just so St. Paul declares that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work;" that is, the moral elements of the "man of sin" were now seminally existing in secret. Important on the **antichrist** and his *time* are our notes on Acts viii, 9; vi, 5; 2 Thess. ii, 1–12; 1 Tim. iv, 1–4. The error of Huther, Alford, and many others, in applying this **last time** to the second advent ought, we should suppose, to have been prevented by Paul's express warning to the Thessalonians that such language did not imply Christ's near approach; as well as St. Peter's caution in 2 Peter iii, 8. See our Supplementary Note at close of Matt. xxv. At the approaching close of his life our apostle saw that the withdrawal of his fellow apostles from this scene of things was the close of a historical cycle, and the development of the errorists foretold by Saint Paul had already approached; so that the *hour* was typical of that last period before the rise of **antichrist,** who precedes the last advent. It was just equivalent to St. Paul's predictive phrase, addressed to this same Ephesus, "after my departure," where these very **many antichrists** are foretold. To this we may perhaps add Grotius's solution, that the **last** hour indicated the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish state. For although the destruction of Jerusalem was no organic part of the framework of the kingdom of God, and probably had past at the time this was written, yet it did. as predicted by Christ, coincide with and characterize as one element the closing apostolic cycle. See

quotation from Hegesippus in note on 1 Tim. iv, 1. **Ye have heard**—St Paul early "told" the Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians ii, 5. **Antichrist**—An epithet used by St. John alone, here and 22; iv, 3; 2 John 7. The word is rightly interpreted by Huther as "not simply the enemy of Christ, but the opposition-Christ; that is, the enemy of Christ who, under the lying guise of Christ, endeavours to destroy the work of Christ." The fundamental mark of this antichrist St. John twice declares to be the denial that Christ was "flesh," iv, 3, and 2 John 7. And this was based on that assumption of the inherent evil of matter, which forbade marriage among the Gnostics, and which appears at the present day in the celibacy of the pope and his immense army of priests throughout the world, and in the promulgation of the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary. Huther is clear as to the identity of John's **antichrist** with Saint Paul's. "Rightly have almost all commentators understood that John understands under this enemy the same as Paul describes, 2 Thess. ii, 3, etc. The points which appear in the picture of Paul, and those in the explanations of John, so coincide and answer to each other that there need be no doubt about it. According to both, the manifestation discloses itself in the Church by an exodus from it; for John says, (verse 19,) the **antichrists went out from us,** and Paul (verse 3) speaks of a **revealed,** and a **falling away.** Both describe him as a God-opposing evil nature. Paul figures him as **the man of sin, the lawless:** John as the **spirit of antichrist,** in antithesis to the spirit of God; and says of the **antichrists** who are animated by him that they are **of the world.** Both characterize him as a liar who strives to make the lie victorious over the truth. Both represent that he appears in the last time before the second advent of Christ. Then, also, if the name *antichrist*,

by we know [g] that it is the last time. **19** [h] They went out from us, but they were not of us; for [i] if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, [k] that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

20 But [l] ye have an unction

[g] 1 Tim. 4. 1; 2 Tim. 3. 1.—[h] Deut. 13. 13; Psa. 41. 9; Acts 20. 30.—[i] Matt. 24. 24; John 6. 37; 10. 28, 29; 2 Tim. 2. 19.—[k] 1 Cor. 11. 19.—[l] 2 Cor. 1. 21; Heb. 1. 9; verse 27.

ἀντίχριστος, is not strictly synonymous with *the anti-lying*, ὁ ἀντικείμενος, yet even this point in Paul's picture is so significant as to show how striking John's naming of the enemy is. And when Paul describes **the man of sin** as showing **himself that he is God,** he clearly implies that spurious *incarnation of God* which the very name of antichrist implies." And we may add, as Huther does not, that as St. Paul (2 Thess. ii, 2) expressly writes to show that he does not mean that either **the man of sin** or the **day of Christ** is really near **at hand,** so St. John does not mean by his **last time** and **many antichrists** that the second advent will be in his day. **Many antichrists—last time**—As the **antichrist** identifies THE **last time,** so the **many antichrists** identify A **last time.**

19. St. John now proceeds to declare that these Nicolaitans, or Gnostics, were not so much apostates as original heretics, at heart discordant with the Church from the very first. So Simon Magus, an original juggler and false doctrinary, entered the Christian body without ever being a Christian; and though he went out formally from the Christian body, he did not apostatize from Christ, for he was never a Christian. **They**—The **antichrists. Went out from us**—They made open exodus from the Christian body. **Not of us—Not of** the true body of Christ in doctrine or heart. They were Maguses, who inserted themselves in the Church, yet holding Christ to be a phantasm. **If they had been**—If they had truly known and loved Christ. **Have continued with us**—The cause of their secession could not then have existed. Loving God and loving the brethren, they would have loved the communion of the Church, and rejoiced to remain in the Christian body. **But**—Their exodus was no loss to the Church, but a good providence. **That**—It was graciously designed. **Manifest**—Their exposure would relieve the Church of all responsibility for their false doctrines and unbecoming lives. **They were not all of us**—Truer rendering, *that not all* (among us) *are* (truly) *of us.* It becomes a clear case that there are some among us for whose principles and conduct the true gospel is irresponsible. Alford, following Düsterdieck, has an elaborate dissertation on the passage, as if it had some bearing on the question of the necessary final perseverance of all true believers. He writes as if the apostle assumed a universal law in the kingdom of God, that a man once converted always *continues* a saved man. But St. John's word **continued** refers not to *continuing a Christian*, but to the remaining in the Church *if you are a Christian.* It does not say, or assume, that all Christians will forever stay Christians; but that it may be assumed, when we know nothing to the contrary, that *these* men would have remained in the Church if they had been, and as long as they were, Christians. Why not?

5. The purifying unction will preserve you from uniting with the antichristic revolt, 20-29.

20. **But**—Rather, *καὶ, and.* It connects with **continued,** and proceeds to show how his readers may *continue* in the catholic body; namely, by **unction** of the Spirit; by using their perfect knowledge of the true apostolic doctrine; and by a firm determination of the will to **abide. Unction**—A *chrism* or anointing oil. The anointing with oil in the dry climate of the east is a means of bodily health and comfort. Hence the anointing-oil became a symbol of divine benediction. In this view, not only in ancient Israel, but even in ancient Egypt, the anointing ceremony was used in in-

[m] from the Holy One, and [n] ye know all things. **21** I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. **22** [o] Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. **23** [p] Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *but* [q] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. **24** Let that therefore abide in you, [r] which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, [s] ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. **25** [t] And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life. **26** These *things* have I written unto you [u] concerning them that seduce you. **27** But [v] the anointing which ye

[m] Mark 1. 24; Acts 3. 14.—[n] John 10. 4, 5; 14. 26; 16. 13; ver. 27.—[o] Chap. 4. 3; 2 John 7.—[p] John 15. 23; 2 John 9.—[q] John 14. 7, 9, 10; chap. 4. 15.—[r] 2 John 6.—[s] John 14. 23; chap. 1. 3.—[t] John 17. 3; chap. 1. 2; 5. 11.—[u] Chap. 3. 7; 2 John 7.—[v] Verse 20.

ducting kings and priests into their sacred office. Compare Exod. xl, 15; Num. iii, 3; Judges ix, 8, 15; 1 Sam. ix, 16; x, 1; 1 Kings i, 34, 39. "The Lord's anointed" was, indeed, the king's title. The word *Christ* signifies *anointed*, as *chrism* signifies the *oil* or the *anointment*. Note on Matt. i, 1. And here the **unction**, or *chrism*, is used in contrast to the *antichrists*, who left **Christ** and became *antichrists*, because they had no such sanctifying *chrism*. **Know all things**—*All*, the whole doctrine of Christ; missing which the *antichrists* revolted.

21. **Not written**—His epistle does not presuppose any doubt of their knowledge, but is an expression of his confidence in their adherence. **No lie**—Like the denial of the reality of Christ's person, and the claim to be pure while wallowing in sin. John had none of the modern delicacy that hesitates to call a lie a **lie**, any more than to call a murder a murder. **Is of the** system of apostolic **truth.** From his own knowledge (note i, 1) our apostle knew that to deny our Lord's flesh and body was a historic fiction, to which Christian **truth** was absolutely opposite.

22. **A liar**—Rather, *the* **liar**; or, as Wesley, more pointedly, *that* **liar. Jesus is the Christ**—The errorists, who believed matter the source of all evil, denied that the material bodily **Jesus** was the real **Christ,** and affirmed that **the Christ** descended upon him at baptism. Hence the trinity was doctrinally disorganized. The **antichrist** of that **last time,** therefore, really denied **the Father and the Son.**

23. **Hath not the Father**—The medium of our divine approach to **the Father,** namely, **the Son,** is by them removed, and they, alas! have **not the Father.** All the blessings of the gracious system, pardon of sin, the *chrism* from **the Holy One,** and the assurance of salvation descending **from the Father** by **the Son** upon us, are forfeited.

24. **Let that**—The sure apostolic tradition. Note on i, 1. The true historic doctrine of the real, genuine **Jesus Christ** you have heard from us, the apostles, who were his chosen witnesses. You have that truth enriched by the *chrism* of **the Holy One. Let it... abide in you**—Otherwise you will become **antichrists,** and abandon the apostolic body. **Heard from the beginning**—It came from Christ himself; whereas the Nicolaitan dogma came from Simon Magus or from Nicholas the deacon. Note on Acts vi, 5. **If**—Here is the dread alternative of perseverance or apostasy; which, your own free will must decide.

25. **Eternal life**—The final and endless blessing coming down upon the faithful from **the Father** through **the Son.** Their attaining it depends upon the **abide,** verse 24.

26. **These... written**—Reviewing from verse 20. **Them that seduce you**—The deniers of the bodily Jesus.

27. But every thing depends upon our retaining this *chrism*, this true **anointing.** As long as we possess the holy *chrism* we will adhere to the

have received of him abideth in you, and [w] ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing [x] teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in [2] him. **28** And now, little children, abide in him; that, [y] when he shall appear, we may have confidence, [z] and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

[w] Jer. 31. 33, 34; Heb. 8. 10, 11.—[x] John 14. 26; 16. 13; verse 20.—2 Or, *it*.—[y] Chapter 3. 2.

holy *Christ*. It is the rich assurance of the testifying and sanctifying Spirit that insures against apostatizing to the fellowship of **them that seduce you.** It gives you a reality of assurance that **ye need** no teachers. According as you firmly retain that **ye shall** (rather, *will*, the simple future) **abide in him.**

28. **Abide in him**—Earnest and repeated exhortation to that determination of their own free will which God will not overrule to their perseverance, and without which they will apostatize. **When he shall** (will) **appear**—Literally, *If* **he** will **appear.** Expressing no doubt of his own, though doubted and contradicted by the errorists. **At his coming**—Whenever that unknown event shall take place.

29. **He**—**The Holy One** of ver. 20, God **the Father. Born of him**—Is, by the *chrism* of **the Holy One,** so conformed to his image as to become his son, the younger brother of Christ. This verse properly belongs to the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

II. Our regeneration and sonship—its glory and requisite purity in contrast with the false (Gnostic) regeneration in impurity, 1–24.

1. Present and possible prospective glory of our regenerate sonship, 1, 2.

The Nicolaitans taught that the regenerate man might so "know God" as to deliver his material body over to all licentious indulgence and yet re-

29 [a] If ye know that he is righteous, [2] ye know that [b] every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

CHAPTER III.

BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that [a] we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, [b] because it knew

[z] Chap. 4. 17.—[a] Acts 22. 14.—3 Or, *know ye*.—[b] Chap. 3. 7, 10.—[a] John 1. 12.—[b] John 15. 18, 19; 16. 3; 17. 25.

main pure. Our apostle now declares that to be anti-Christianity. True regeneration is not purity *in* sin, but purity *from* sin. On the contrary, between regeneration and sin there is an absolute opposition. And to exhibit the two in strong contrast is the purpose of this chapter. One belongs to the realm of God, of Christ, of righteousness, of heaven; the other belongs to the realm of Satan, of unrighteousness, of destruction.

1. **Behold**—As if a new vision of the glory of our sonship, present and future, beamed on the apostle's sight. **Manner**—Style or nature. Not only is that **love** wonderful in *amount*, but it is most extraordinary in *quality*, working a strangely glorious transformation in and of us. **Of love**—He beholds that sonship in the full glory of its source, the divine **love. Called**—In the dialect of God, of heaven, and, therefore, of truth. **Sons**—Literally, *children*. We were once *generated* as children of nature; we are *re*generated as *children* **of God.** But this regeneration is as yet in commencement; is secret within us until its revelation in the resurrection, when the transformation will be complete and all-glorious. And our being divinely so-**called** is an acknowledgment of our sonship by the Father, who thereby adopts us as his and gives us the spirit of adoption, crying, Abba! Father! To this, the best reading, add, *and we are*. That is, not only are we so **called,** but **we** truly *are* the children of God. **Therefore** corresponds to **because,** indicating that

him not. **2** Beloved, [c]now are we the sons of God, and [d]it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, [e]we shall be like him; [f]for we shall see him as he is.

3 [g]And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. **4** Whosoever

[c] Isa. 56. 5; Rom. 8. 15; Gal. 3. 26; 4. 6; chap. 5. 1.—[d] Rom. 8. 18; 2 Cor. 4. 17.—[e] Rom. 8. 29; 1 Cor. 15. 49; Phil. 3. 21; Col. 3. 4.—[f] Job 19. 26; Matt. 5. 8; 2 Cor. 5. 8.—[g] Chap. 4. 17.

the latter clause, **knew him not,** gives the reason for **knoweth us not. Knoweth us not**—The Christian looks like anybody else; no gleam of divine glory gives token of his divine nobility to the eye of **the world. Knew him not**—Even the Nicolaitan Gnostic, who so calls himself—that is, a *knower*, because he "knows God"—**knew him not,** and so recognises not us as his children.

2. **Now... yet**—Contrast of the humble present with the transcendent future. **Are**—Emphatic; true, in spite of the occultness of our sonship and non-recognition by **the world.** Even **what we shall be,** does but very dimly appear. But at the resurrection, as Paul says, a "glory shall be revealed *in* us." And then will be "the manifestation of the sons of God." Rom. viii, 18, 19. **Like him... see him as he is**—From the certainty that **we shall see him as he is, we know that... we shall be like him;** for it is only like natures that truly realize each other. The brute can realize man only just so far as he resembles man; and man can realize spirit only just so far as he is like spirit; and the human can **see** God only so far as it is **like him.** If, therefore, when the limitations of flesh are flung off, and our "spiritual body" of the resurrection shall be such as to be no limitation at all, we **see him as he is,** then it is certain that **we shall be** most perfectly **like him.** Or, conversely, our seeing him **as he is** may cause us to become more and more like him. Gazing upon beautiful models the soul becomes beautified: our characters are formed by imitating improving examples. By realizing the divine beauty we become divinely perfected. If we see him as he is, we know that we shall be constantly made to become like him. See note on 2 Cor. iii, 18.

Regeneration, as a *term*, does not appear in Scripture, but it is expressed in all such phrases as *born* or *begotten of God.* It is that work of the Holy Spirit by which, immediately upon our repentance and faith, (which are preceded by the convicting and enabling influences of the Spirit,) the love of God and the Christian graces spring up in the soul. The first spark of divine love is the spark of spiritual life—the spark of an everlasting life; which, if preserved within the soul, will advance until it works out the resurrection glory.

2. Purification from actual sin the test of our sonship, 3-10.

3. **And**—Even in our humble state the very **hope** inspires **every man** to *purify* **himself,** aspiring even now to a divine likeness. **Purifieth himself**—Outwardly, by abstaining from the external acts of sin; inwardly, by cultivating the grace of the sanctifying Spirit within us. **He**—God. If our faith holds to an impure God above us, we are indeed abandoned to impurity; but if the divine holiness is ever our standard of character, then we aspire to the high and holy.

4. **Whosoever**—Our apostle turns now from the regenerate to the transgressor. And verse 7 fully shows that he is dealing with transgressors who denied the true nature of **sin. Committeth**—Practiseth, as a continuous present tense, and referring to the open act. To those who deny that misdeeds of the body are **sin,** he replies by unflinchingly subjecting their deeds to the **law,** with all its condemnatory power of penalty. **The law**—The law of eternal rectitude, which is the divine law, also, (verse 11,) of **love.** The bodily deeds of a Nicolaitan can plead no exemption from that **law** or its sentence. **Sin...**

committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for [h] sin is the transgression of the law. **5** And ye know [i] that he was manifested [k] to take away our sins; and [l] in him is no sin. **6** Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: [m] whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. **7** Little children, [n] let no man deceive you: [o] he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. **8** [p] He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, [q] that he might destroy the works of the devil. **9** [r] Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for [s] his seed remaineth in him: and he

h Rom. 4. 15; chap. 5. 17.——*i* Chap. 1. 2.——*k* Isa. 53. 5, 6, 11; 1 Tim. 1. 15; Heb. 1. 3; 9. 26; 1 Pet. 2. 24.——*l* 2 Cor. 5. 21; Heb. 4. 15; 9. 28; 1 Pet. 2. 22.——*m* Chap. 2. 4; 4. 8; 3 John 11.

n Chap. 2. 26.——*o* Ezek. 18. 5-9; Rom. 2. 13; chap. 2. 29.——*p* Matt. 13. 38; John 8. 44.——*q* Gen. 3. 15; Luke 10. 18; John 16. 11; Heb. 2. 14.——*r* Chap. 5. 18.——*s* 1 Pet. 1. 23.

transgression... law—A **sin** and a **transgression of the law** are one and the same thing, so that the act at variance with the **law** is **sin,** and liable to all the condemnation of **sin,** or violated divine **law.**

5. **Ye know**—By the old apostolic teaching from Christ himself, that so far is our Christianity from admitting that transgression is consistent with regeneration, **he was manifested** for this very purpose, **to take away our sins**—our violations of law—whether in single act or permanent state. **No sin**—Either of act or character. He violated not God's law, but was in perfect conformity to it.

6. **Abideth in him**—Christ, who is viewed here as the embodiment of his own atonement and doctrine; and to abide **in him** is to live in the full embodiment therein of our own being. **Seen him**—By the divine spiritual vision; as in John xiv, 7, 9; 3 John 11. **Known him**—Become experimentally acquainted with him. The English perfect tense seems to the reader to deny that if a man now sins he ever possessed religion. "If he has lost it, he never had it." But, as Alford well shows, the Greek perfect much more strongly emphasizes the present time than the English, and even sometimes loses the reference to the past and expresses the present only. We may add that Ezekiel (xxxiii, 13,) declares of the apostate that "all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered." To the divine recognition he never has been righteous, just as (Ezek. xxxiii, 16) to the divine eye the convert to righteousness has never been a sinner. In truth, however, John has no reference to an apostate; he is only strongly emphasizing the blindness of the sinner to Christ.

7. **Let no man deceive you**—An earnest warning against the Nicolaitan doctrinaries who taught that holiness is consistent with licentious deeds and open wicked life. **Doeth**—The *continuous present.* Not he that merely once **doeth,** but who permanently practiseth **righteousness is righteous.** There is no righteousness in the man that **doeth** not **righteousness.** By their fruits shall ye know them.

8. **Committeth sin**—The opposite of **doeth righteousness** in previous verse, and both are in the *continuous present tense,* referring not to single subordinate acts, but to predominant *practice.* **Of the devil**—The practiser of **sin** is not a justified Christian, but *a sinner,* and is **of the devil. Sinneth**—The *continuous present* again; **the devil sinneth from the beginning,** even to the ending. **Destroy**--Not matter as the essence of sin, but **the** actual **works of the devil,** performed in his own person and through his agents. This does not mean to abolish the penalty of sin, which is a *work* of divine justice.

9. **His** (God's) **seed**—The regenerate vital principle divinely implanted **remaineth** as a permanent though not irremovable element **in him.** This definition of the **seed** accords essentially with the various definitions given by most commentators. So

cannot sin, because he is born of God. **10** In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: [t] whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, [u] neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For [v] this is the [1] message that ye heard from the beginning, [w] that we should love one another.

[t] Chap. 2. 29.—[u] Chap. 4. 8.—[v] Chap. 1. 5; 2. 7.—[1] Or, *commandment.*

[w] John 13. 34; 15. 12; verse 23; chap. 4. 7, 21; 2 John 5.

Luther, "*natura spiritualis*," spiritual birth-nature; De Wette, "the power of the divine life;" Braune, "the spirit of God." Alford less happily refers it to "the divine word of truth." While the fixed purpose of faith abides he **cannot sin,** or be a regular sinner, any more than ice can bear caloric, for the two things are incompatible. The falsely regenerate Nicolaitan *can* grossly and continuously **sin,** and retain his pseudo-regeneration; but the truly regenerate **cannot** practise **sin, because he is** genuinely **born of God;** and while so, sin-practice is for him an *incompatibility,* not a volitional *impossibility.* Those who press the terms of this text to prove the infallible perseverance of all regenerate persons must accept them in their full literality: and then they will prove, not only certainty of not apostatizing, but an incapability to even *sin,* an impeccability in the regenerate. Nor can the text prove the sinlessness of merely the entirely sanctified, or the class of "perfect Christians," for the predicates are affirmed of all that are **born of God.**

If the words prove that a regenerate person *cannot* become a sinner, then Romans viii, 7 proves that no carnally minded man can ever become subject to the law of God; for the same word for *cannot* is there used. See our note.

Alford, Wordsworth, and others remark here again the import of the Greek perfect tense as having the force of a present; which, indeed, is well expressed in our English translation **is born.** The Greek aorist would be *was born,* and Alford remarks pointedly that in practice the force of the perfect in Christian life is sadly apt to degenerate from the **is** to the *was;* the former expressing present regenerate life, in which to *practice* **sin** is impossible; the latter the departed vitality, in which the impossible has become easy.

The verb *sin,* in Heb. x, 26, clearly means to become a sinner, in opposition to being a Christian. In this chapter, (verse 8,) **sinneth** is in the continuous present, and means *permanently practises sin.* See note on v, 18. But the true meaning is simply this: The Gnostic, in his false regeneration, can consistently live in the practice of sin; but a Christian *cannot* practice sin, for as a Christian he retains a regenerate principle incompatible with **sin.** He cannot practice sin and stay a Christian.

Wordsworth gives a pertinent passage from Ignatius, who was born before St. John's death. "Let no one deceive you. They who are carnal cannot do the things that are spiritual; nor can they who are spiritual do the things that are carnal. Faith cannot do the works of unbelief, nor can unbelief do the works of faith. The works which ye do in the flesh are spiritual, because ye work all your work in Jesus Christ."—IGNATIUS, *Ep. ad Eph.* viii.

10. **This . . . manifest**—The open, **manifest** difference between the two is their moral conduct. **Loveth not**—Guarding against the idea that it is the action of the body alone that constitutes the test, and including the act of the soul as **living.**

4. This purification is manifested in love to our brother and in actual benefaction, 11-18.

11. **The message . . . from the beginning**—The original announcement by Christ was the law of **love.**

12. **Not as Cain**—Who is a model to avoid. And Cain and Abel are types of the world and the brethren through 12–16. Cain is selected, apparently, from association of the idea,

12 Not as [x] Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous. **13** Marvel not, my brethren, if [y] the world hate you. **14** [z] We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. [a] He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. **15** [b] Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that [c] no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. **16** [d] Here-

[x] Gen. 4. 4, 8; Heb. 11. 4; Jude 11.—[y] John 15. 18, 19; 17. 14; 2 Tim. 3. 12.—[z] Chap. 2. 10.—[a] Chap. 2. 9, 11.

[b] Matt. 5. 21, 22; chap. 4. 20.—[c] Gal. 5. 21 Rev. 21. 8.—[d] John 3. 16; 15. 13; Rom. 5. 8 Eph. 5. 2, 25; chap. 4. 9, 11.

moral and bodily, of the word **brother;** and the first two brothers of mankind are presented as types of the two classes of mankind. Verse 10 says, Love your **brother;** this verse says, Not as Cain who slew his **brother,** being a son of *the devil* and *brother* to the devil's *children;* verse 14 quotes love of **the brethren** as token of our sonship; and so the further verses. **Of,** or from **that wicked one.** But was Cain born of the devil? It must be remembered that regeneration is a figurative term. When the power of the Spirit conforms us more or less to the image of God, we are said to be born of God, children of God; while conformed to the image of Satan, we are called *children of the devil.* The old Jewish legends fabled that **Cain** was the physical son of Satan by Eve. But his sonship, like our divine sonship, was in fact spiritual. **Slew his** natural, not moral, **brother. Evil... righteous** — The antagonism of sons of God and children of the devil was the dividing line between them.

13. **Hate you** — It is nothing but the old antagonism of Cain and Abel. **You** stands as the parallel of Abel; **the world** as the parallel of Cain.

14. **We know**—As one of the tests. The fraternal love, which Cain wanted and Abel possessed, is inherited by us; and thus **we know** we are on the side of **life** and not of **death.** Yet we belong with the good Abel not by natural descent; but, having been originally under **death, we have passed** therefrom unto **life.** So that our regeneration is also a resurrection. **Brethren** — This oft-repeated word is used in no narrow, bigoted, or partisan sense, but designates all who are, with us, the sons of God, and hence the universal Church of the truly justified. The central element of this brotherhood and sonship is a divine **love;** verily divine since God himself is **love,** and is that **love** within the heart. Hence a consciousness of that love for the sons is proof of love for the common Father, **God,** v, 1; and reciprocally the consciousness of our love to God is proof that we truly **love the brethren,** the **sons of God,** v, 2. And this is no mere shallow emotional **love,** it is realistic, and is embodied in keeping God's commandments, v, 2. Hence these **brethren** are the truly good, and actually holy in the world; and this love is no gross affection, but transcendent and divine. It is a love on earth anticipating the love which constitutes heaven above. **Loveth not**—As Cain did **not.** The loveless being, uninspired by any divine affection, has never made the transition to **life,** but **abideth in death. Death**— The opposite of **eternal life** in ii, 25, as also in verse following.

15. **Hateth... murderer** — In applying so trenchant an epithet as **murderer,** our apostle changes the phrase **loveth not** to **hateth.** The epithet is suggested by the case of **Cain.** The positive element of *hate* is initial murder; murder in *kind,* even when not in degree. So the **love** in the following verse is in contrast. This hate need only to be developed in its own kind to make the actual murder; just as the element of that love in its fulness produces a laying down of one's own life for **the brethren.** Hate is the common element that makes the brotherhood of Cain. Thence come all the strifes, the murders, the wars of our depraved human life.

by perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. **17** But [e] whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, [f] how dwelleth the love of God in him? **18** My little children, [g] let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we [h] are of the truth, and shall [2] assure our hearts before him. **20** [i] For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. **21** [k] Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, [l] *then* have we confidence toward God. **22** And

[e] Deut. 15. 7; Luke 3. 11.—[f] Chap. 4. 20.—[g] Ezek. 33. 31; Rom. 12. 9; Eph. 4. 15; James 2. 15, 16; 1 Peter 1. 22.

[h] John 18. 37; chapter 1. 8.—[2] Greek, *persuade*.—[i] 1 Cor. 4. 4.—[k] Job 22. 26.—[l] Heb. 10. 22; chap. 2. 28.

16. **Of God**, as the italics indicate, is not in the Greek, and should be omitted. **He** has no antecedent, and refers to our true Abel, the unnamed Jesus. Between him, the Unnamed, and **Cain** is a solemn contrast; the latter exemplifies what *hate* is in its completion, the former the consummation of **love**. As hate is the element that murders a brother, so **love** is the element that would die for a **brother**.

17. **But**—Introducing a contrast between this consummate **love** which would give life, and that want of **love** which would refuse even the alms that would supply a needed livelihood. **Bowels**—The conceptual bodily seat of the compassionate affections. **How**—Strong interrogative expression of the negative. For since our love of our brother and our love of God are one element and essence, the exclusion of one excludes the other.

18. The man who thus withholds the alms may have a theory of benevolence in his head, and **in word**, and **in tongue**; but there is none in heart or hand.

4. This love is evidenced to ourselves by assurance through faith in Christ and witness of the Spirit given unto us, 19-24.

19. **Hereby**—By our real good-doing **in deed**. **Of the truth**—Our deeds are seal of **the truth** of our religion. So that **love** and **truth** identify into one, taking external form in deeds of goodness. **Assure...hearts**—Literally, *persuade* **our hearts**; that is, produce in **our hearts** the persuasion that we are all right **before** God our judge.

20. **If our heart condemn us**—As not loving our brother **in deed** and in active benefaction to his needs. If we are conscious of wrong-doings or short-comings. **Greater than our heart**—And his condemnation is more terrible, as well as more sure, for he **knoweth all things**, and no guilt can escape his inspection.

21. **Condemn us not**—Our self-complacency may, indeed, deceive us, and we may think our **heart** does not **condemn** when the **heart** is itself beguiled. While our own **hearts condemn us not**, the **hearts** and consciences of others may justly **condemn us**. And in verses 23, 24 is given a test by which the assurance of the **heart** is tried. The **love** which is **truth** must wear the garb of **deed** and fulfilment of **his commandments**, otherwise vain is the appeal to **our hearts**. **Confidence toward God**—We feel the full assurance of sin forgiven, of divine acceptance, of blessed communion, of a "title clear to mansions in the skies."

22. **And**—We feel full access in prayer. **Whatsoever**—In this frame of sweet accord with God **we ask**, **we receive**. That spirit of accord will, indeed, circumscribe our **ask** within the limits of God's will that we should have. And the Spirit grants delightful contentment and resignation to our lot within that blessed sphere. **Keep his commandments**—For without this objective test no subjective assurance is genuine. Our apostle gives no comfort to a *mere*

[m] whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, [n] and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. **23** [o] And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, [p] and love one another, [q] as he gave us commandment. **24** And [r] he that keepeth his commandments [s] dwelleth in him, and he in him. And [t] hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

[m] Psa. 34. 15; 145. 18, 19; Prov. 15. 29; Jer. 29. 12; Matt. 7. 8; Mark 11. 24; John 14. 13; James 5. 16; chapter 5. 14. — [n] John 8. 29; 9. 31. — [o] John 6. 29; 17. 3. — [p] Matt. 22. 39; John 13. 34; Eph. 5. 2; 1 Thess. 4. 9; 1 Peter 4. 8; chapter 4. 21.

emotional self-gratulation which is not confirmed by the volitional and active keeping and doing the positive **commandments,** that is, doing in all respects what is conscientious and right. The old Mosaic decalogue is not repealed in our behalf. The emotionalism that repeals the **commandments** is antinomianism.

23. **And this**—Is the true test of all emotionalism. A true **believe** and a true **love,** verified by actual performance, negative and positive, of **the commandment;** that is, of all duty.

24. **Keepeth his commandments**—Our apostle is no Nicolaitan, and no antinomian. This *keeping* **the commandments** before the eyes of men, in the spirit of faith and love, is the best profession and showing forth of our holiness to the world that we can make. And all our state thus attained we may finally **know... by the Spirit,** the direct testimony given by him in our hearts uniting with the testimony of our open practical life.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRYING OF THE ANTICHRISTIC SPIRITS, 1–21.

1. **The three condemnatory tests—non-confession of a human Jesus; worldliness; the not hearing us, the apostolic witnesses, 1–6.**

1. **Believe not every spirit**—In this, the apostolic day of supernatural manifestations there are false inspirations, as well as true. There are demoniac instigations as well as true revelations. The term **Spirit of God,** in the second verse, shows that by **spirits** are antithetically meant, not merely human intellects or personalities, nor a temper or disposition of human minds. The errors of the errorists are referred back to supernatural sources; though the word **spirits** spontaneously, in verses 2 and 3, becomes a designation of the man himself inspired by the spirit. So the demoniac of Gadara becomes identified with the demon possessing him. See notes on Mark v, 1–20; 2 Thess. ii, 9. **False prophets**—Each possessed by, and identified with, his own **spirit,** and teaching his own particular error. **Gone out**—From their chief commissioner, Satan. The intensity of John's feelings in regard to these antichristic emissaries appears from his reference to the same **deceivers** in his second epistle, verse 7. There they **have entered into the world,** and each one is **antichrist,** and earnest warnings are given for a profound avoidance of them.

2. **Hereby**—*First* test of a true *spirit.* This test is aimed at the Docetist, who denied the **flesh** and body of Christ, and made him a phantom. **Every spirit... of God**—The apostle's language is seemingly sweeping Is the spirit that confesses Jesus **come in the flesh,** and yet denies other truths, truly **of God?** Or, as Augustine (quoted by Wordsworth) asks: "Arius, and Eunomius, and Macedonius, and Nestorius, own that Jesus came **in the flesh;** are not they, therefore, of God?

[q] Chapter 2. 8, 10. — [r] John 14. 23; 15. 10; chapter 4. 12. — [s] John 17. 21. — [t] Rom. 8. 9; chapter 4. 13. — [a] Jer. 29. 8; Matt. 24. 4. — [b] 1 Cor. 14. 29; 1 Thess. 5. 21; Rev. 2. 2. — [c] Matt 24. 5; Acts 20. 30; 1 Tim. 4. 1; 2 Pet. 2. 1; chap 2. 18; 2 John 7.

CHAPTER IV.

BELOVED, [a] believe not every spirit, but [b] try the spirits whether they are of God: because [c] many false prophets are gone out into the world. **2** Hereby know

ye the Spirit of God: [d] Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: **3** And [e] every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and [f] even now already is it in the world. **4** [g] Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than [h] he that is in the world. **5** [i] They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and [k] the world heareth them. **6** We are of God: [l] he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God

d 1 Cor. 12. 3; chap. 5. 1. — *e* Chap. 2. 22; 2 John 7. — *f* 2 Thess. 2. 7; chap. 2. 18, 23. — *g* Chap. 5. 4. — *h* John 12. 31; 14. 30; 16. 11; 1 Cor. 2. 12; Eph. 2. 2; 6. 12. — *i* John 3. 31. — *k* John 15. 19; 17. 14. — *l* John 8. 47; 10. 27; 1 Cor. 14. 37; 2 Cor. 10. 7.

To this Augustine answers: "Those heresiarchs did not, in fact, confess Christ **come in the flesh**, because, whatever they might do in words, they in their works denied him. (Titus i, 16.) They have not charity because they have not unity;" that is, unity with the Church. Wordsworth gives a different answer, which is in effect, that to confess Christ **come in the flesh** is to confess him as Messiah, with all that embraces; namely, his divine atonement for our sins. Compare our notes on verse 15 and v, 1. Perhaps the apostle would say, that whatever error Arius or other heretic believed, he derived from a false spirit; but whatever truth he held, as the incarnation of Christ, came from a good *spirit* and was **of God.** The *spirit*, here, is not wholly the man, but the inspiration from good or evil in the man. But our own view is that the apostle is deciding between two claimants to being **of God,** the one denying and the other affirming that Jesus is come in the flesh; and he pronounces for the latter. So that of the two sides he that confesseth is of God.

3. **Every spirit that confesseth not**—The Vulgate has this remarkable reading of this verse: "Every spirit which *separates* Jesus is not of God." This alludes to the heresy of Cerinthus, the contemporary of John, who taught that Jesus was merely the son of human parents, but that the Christ was an æon, or superhuman being, who descended upon Jesus at his baptism; thus *separating* the person of Jesus. It would seem that the ancient Greek Church historian, Socrates, recognised this reading in ancient manuscripts, as well as Tertullian, Irenæus, and Origen. But all the Greek MSS., and all the Versions except the Vulgate, have the present reading. **That spirit of antichrist**—The special doctrine of emphatically *the* antichrist, based on the affirmation that all evil is identical with matter. **Should come**—Was prophesied as to **come** immediately before the second advent. **Already is it**—See note on ii, 18.

4. *Second* test of antichristic spirits—*worldliness.* In the contest between the Church and the **world,** they are on the world's side. **Have overcome**—By placing faith in Christ, the world's conqueror. Note on v, 4. **Them**—The antichristic spirits, who are identified with the world. **He...in you**—God. **In the world**—Satan, as its inspirer and prince.

5. **Speak they of** (rather *from*) **the world**—They draw their inspiration, not from Christ, but from the world-spirit; and their doctrines are but the expression of the world's feelings; and themselves are the organs of the Satan-inspired **world.**

6. **We**—The utterers of the true apostolic traditions from Christ himself, as claimed with bold emphasis by our St. John in i, 1–3. Hence here is the *third* test of the antichristic spirits—the *not hearing the true gospel history and doctrine*, as maintained and declared by St. John and his fellow-apostles. Compare similar claim of St. Paul, 1 Tim. i, 11–20, with our notes. As the apostles were the true chosen witnesses and pupils of Jesus, their narrative of facts and statements of principles are solely authoritative. The heretics were outsiders. They

heareth not us. Hereby know we [m] the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7 [n] Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. **8** He that loveth not, [o] knoweth not God; for [p] God is love. **9** [q] In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, [r] that we might live through him. **10** Herein is love, [s] not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [t] *to be* the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, [u] if God so loved us, we ought also

m Isa. 8. 20; John 14. 17.—*n* Chap. 3. 10, 11, 23.—*o* Chap. 2. 4; 3. 6.—*p* Verse 16.—*q* John 3. 16; Rom. 5. 8; 8. 32; chap. 3. 16.

r Chap. 5. 11.—*s* John 15. 16; Rom. 5. 8, 10; Titus 3. 4.—*t* Chap. 2. 2.—*u* Matt. 18. 33; John 15. 12, 13; chap. 3. 16.

took their systems from the spirit of the age — **the world** — mixed them with Christian dogma, and undertook to palm an unhistorical, unauthentic, pseudo-Christianity upon the Church.

2. The one confirmatory test—love. The threefold love between God, the believer, and the brethren, 7-21.

The one test is **love**; centered in God, 8; and manifested to us in Christ, 9–11; into which **love** we come by union through faith with Christ and God, 12–16; which love may be perfected in us, 17–19; and this divine **love** is **love** to our fellow-man, 20, 21.

Our apostle does not argue and reason out this statement; he *affirms* it, aphoristically and positively, by successive assertions, as one who *knows*, having full original acquaintance with Christ himself. His words are dicta; the dicta of an authorized, original expounder, as being derived from the incarnate Original.

7. **Love one another** — Namely, with that elevated **love** which desires and seeks to do everything for the happiness of the object loved, both temporal and eternal. Our apostle here begins with this spirit of **love** in our hearts, and traces it to its fountain, **God. Knoweth God**—Philosophers may prove by various arguments the being and attributes of **God**; but it is to divine experience we must resort to **know God** as **love.** Much of goodness appears in nature, but the fulness of **love** in God is learned by grace alone.

8. **Loveth not, knoweth not God** —It is the true heart that truly **knoweth God.** Without that blessed medium he is, after all, an "unknown God." It is the pure in heart that "see God." **God is love**—This blessed truth truly realized delivers from all atheism, all pessimism, all despondency at the evil in the world. When our hearts are right all is right.

9. **In this was manifested**—The kingdom of nature is full of destruction: it is in the kingdom of grace that **God,** as **love,** is **manifested,** and in the kingdom of glory is perfectly realized. The infinite and universal secret that **God is love,** rather than that *God is power*, obscured or concealed in physical nature, is embodied in Christ, revealed in his life and death, and proclaimed by his gospel. **Sent his only begotten Son**—Not only proof of his love, but its incarnation and embodiment; revealing God's character as **love** even in nature and in all things. **Live**—Be delivered from original non-existence, and enabled to **live** the life of eternal **love.**

10. **Herein**—In this that follows. **Is love—Love** essential and original, showing what real **love** is. **We loved God**—This was not original, but secondary and consequent; though for us an infinitely important consequence. **He loved us**—The **propitiation** was not needed from want of **love** for us in God the Father; in fact it sprang from, and was the expression of, his **love.** The wrath that needed to be propitiated was simply pure justice in its serenest, divinest form, which must be sustained as the basis of a moral realm. **Propitiation** —See notes on ii, 1; Rom. iii, 25.

11. **Love one another**—The infi-

to love one another. **12** [v] No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and [w] his love is perfected in us. **13** [x] Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. **14** And [y] we have seen and do testify that [z] the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. **15** [a] Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. **16** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. [b] God is love; and [c] he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. **17** Herein is [1] our love made perfect, that [d] we may have boldness in the day of judgment: [e] because as he is, so are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath

v John 1. 18; 1 Tim. 6. 16; verse 20.—*w* Chap. 2. 5; verse 18.—*x* John 14. 20; chap. 3. 24.—*y* John 1. 14; chap. 1. 1, 2.—*z* John 3. 17.

a Rom. 10. 9; chap. 5. 1, 5.—*b* Ver. 8.—*c* Ver. 12; chap. 3. 24.—1 Gr., *love with us.*—*d* Jas. 2. 13; chap. 2. 28; 3. 19, 21.—*e* Chap. 3. 3.

nite consequence noted in our comment on last verse. God's original **love,** poured forth through Christ, envelopes us all, and requires that we should all be ensphered in one common threefold **love,** with each other and with Christ and God.

12. **No man hath seen God**—Neither with bodily nor mental eye. And so we can know him as he is, **love,** only in the light of that circumfused **love** wherewith we **love one another** and him, to which we attain through the divine Propitiator, who has reconciled and unified us all in **love,** and through whom **God has given us his Spirit,** affirming him to be **love. If we love one another** with divine **love,** our incapacity to ocularly **see** God is remedied in this luminiferous ether of **love.**

13. **His Spirit**—Which is itself at once love and light, warming us with itself, and showing itself to be of God.

14. **We have seen and do testify**—This **we** is mainly the apostles. The coming of the **Son as seen,** bases the whole doctrine on historic grounds. **Saviour of the world**—This is his universal office. His atonement is universal, his salvation is universal, limited only in its effects by its being rejected by its proper subjects.

15. **Confess**—In accordance with our **testify,** in last verse. **Jesus... Son of God**—Not but that men may barely **confess** this one article and reject other truths, and thus be unsaved heretics. Our apostle simply gives this essential part for the whole **testify;** this being the test question between him and the heretics with whom he is dealing. Note iv, 2.

16. **Known**—Not by direct, literal sight of God, (verse 12,) but by consciousness of his divine **love,** by which we feel that he **is love.**

17. **Love...perfect**—It is carried to its proper completion. **Boldness**—Fearlessness. A calm assurance that our judge is our friend, and that for us there is no condemnation. And this **boldness** is not based on the idea that there is no punishment for the finally impenitent, but upon the consciousness, through the spirit of love bestowed upon us, that our reconciliation with him is **perfect. Day of judgment.** His *parousia,* or **coming.** See notes on ii, 28; 2 Thess. ii, 2, 8. **As he is, so are we**—Our moral conformity in love gives us a trusting sympathy. He is the holy Son of God, we, his reconciled children. **In this world**—Equally opposed to us both.

18. **No fear in love**—They are contrary affections. So far as **love** is **perfected** so far is **fear** dispersed. So Bengel strikingly gives he grades of our moral state: "Without fear or love; with fear, but without love: with both love and fear; with love without fear." **Casteth out**—The stronger and better affection expels the weaker and the worse. **Fear hath torment**—And this shows that the exclusion of the apostle's **fear** is not the exclusion of that reverential

torment. He that feareth [f] is not made perfect in love. **19** We love him, because he first loved us. **20** [g] If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God [h] whom he hath not seen? **21** And [i] this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

[f] Ver. 12.—[g] Chap. 2. 4; 3. 17.—[h] Ver. 12.—[i] Matt. 22. 37, 39; John 13. 34; 15. 12; chap. 3. 23.

fear which "is the beginning of wisdom." **Torment**—Sense of guilt and dread of penalty. **Feareth**—The dread of penalty arising from conscious guilt shows us to be not **perfect in love.** We have here, then, something of a subjective measure of what is sometimes called "Christian perfection." When there exists within our hearts the consciousness of the full divine acceptance, so complete that we have no fear at the thought of meeting him at **judgment,** we may trust that our **love is perfected.** The maintenance of this consciousness, sustained and justified by the external life, is the highest aim of life.

19. **He first loved us**—And thus our firm and fearless **love** has a firm and assuring base, his antecedent **love.** God as **love** is source of all divine love in man. That preceding **love** demands our responsive **love,** and becomes its assurance.

20. And this **love** is circumfused around us, encompassing our **brother. Hath seen...hath not seen**—We can love those we have not seen—our invisible benefactors. The Americans love Washington. But it is a higher effort, depending on faith and not sight, to love a person of past history. But as said on verse 12, we know the unseen God as **love** only through the blessed atmosphere of love encompassing our **seen** brethren with ourselves. Without love to the **seen,** he is **a liar** who claims to love the unseen **God.**

21. And this whole doctrine of **love** takes the form of a **commandment.** Not only *we may*, but *we must.* It is a

CHAPTER V.

WHOSOEVER [a] believeth that [b] Jesus is the Christ is [c] born of God: [d] and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. **2** By this [e] we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep

[a] John 1. 12.—[b] Chap. 2. 22, 23; 4. 2, 15.—[c] John 1. 13.—[d] John 15. 23.—[e] John 13. 34, 35; 15. 17

divine invariable law, that the lover of God be a lover of his brother. Our highest blessedness is our highest duty.

CHAPTER V.

1. POWER OF THIS REGENERATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST, 1–21.

1. Its effects — love, spontaneous obedience, victory, 1–5.

Becoming sons of God by faith, we love the sons of God, and love our divine Father's commandments through a world-conquering **faith,** 1–5. The object of our **faith**—Christ—is attested by the threefold reliable testimony, 6–10. The contents of this **faith** are **eternal life,** (13,) the answer of prayer, (14, 15,) especially for an erring brother, (16–18,) and the knowledge of our unity with the true God, in separation from **idols,** xix, 21.

1. **Whosoever believeth**—In order to a full communion with God in Christ, full hearty assent of intellect, heart, and will, must be conceded to **Christ.** This faith embraces him as Christ, that is, as *anointed* Son of God, with all his offices of *propitiator* and giver of **eternal life. Whosoever** so **believeth** is **born of God.** He is child of God, as Christ is **only-begotten Son of God. Loveth...begat...loveth ...begotten**—He that loves the Father loves the Father's Son, and loves the Father's sons. They are, indeed, his brothers by a celestial parentage. Our filial love ascends to our Father, **God,** and thence comes down upon all his sons. And all form one great communion of **love.**

2. **Love the children of...love**

his commandments. **3** [f]For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and [g]his commandments are not grievous. **4** For [h]whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. **5** Who is he that overcometh the world, but [i]he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is he that came [k]by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. [l]And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the

f John 14. 15, 21, 23; 15. 10; 2 John 6.—*g* Mic. 6. 8; Matt. 11. 30.—*h* John 16. 33; chap. 3. 9; 4. 4.

i 1 Cor. 15. 57; chap. 4. 15.—*k* John 19. 34.—*l* John 14. 17; 15. 26; 16. 13; 1 Tim. 3. 16.

God—In iv, 12, (where see note,) our love to the brethren proves our love to God; while here, reciprocally, our love to God proves love to the brethren. The former goes in the order from effect to cause, the latter goes from cause to effect. **Commandments**—The keeping of commandments is the external form and expression of our love to God.

3. **Love . . . commandments**—A still more explicit identification of **love** with obedience. **Not grievous**—**Love** loves to obey. The loving heart runs eagerly out to service. **Love** makes duty delight. When the cross of duty is heavy it is a sign of feeble **love.** When his commandments are **grievous,** it is because our heart is disobedient and our faith is low. We are then liable to be conquered by **the world,** and to sin a **sin unto death.**

4. This *overcoming* **the world** is a key-note to John's apocalypse. Rev. ii, 7, 11, 17, 26. It implies that the hostile world seeks, both by temptations and by persecutions, to seduce or to destroy the sons of God. It is **faith** in Christ that causes, and even constitutes, the victory of the faithful over all the hostilities of **the world.** The **for** commencing this verse indicates that it gives a reason why **his commandments** (verse 3) **are not grievous,** but joyous. **Faith** and **victory** render an exultant obedience to **his commandments** a delight. **Faith** in his leader, and assurance and enjoyment of **victory** render the Christian soldier joyously obedient to his captain's orders.

5. Same truth in triumphant and personal form. **Who**—Find the true world-conqueror, and tell us **who** and **what** he is. **Believeth**—And the secret of his all-conquering strength, what is it? Faith. Faith in whom? In **Jesus** as **the Son of God,** with whom all **the brethren** are conquerors of **the world** and winners of **eternal life.**

2. **And Christ, divinely attested by the threefold witnesses, is supremely worthy of faith, 6-10.**

6. **This . . . Jesus,** named in previous verse. **He that came**—For this Jesus is truly the great **he . . . that came.** He was God's predicted COMER; and his *coming* was the Advent. And **he came,** attested by two tokens divinely appointed, namely, **water and blood.** There have been many fanciful interpretations of the **water and blood;** but the best commentators now agree that the **water** was the water of Christ's baptism, and the **blood** the propitiating **blood** of his crucifixion. And thus, as Huther well notes, the commencement and the ending of our Lord's ministry are symbolized by these two elements. The **came,** therefore, refers not to his birth, but to his office and earthly life, which are thus *one extended coming.* Yet John uses the past tense **came** to denote that definite historical fact, and not any continuous spiritual *coming* through ages. The preposition **by** should rather be *through,* and the meaning is, that he **came** into manifestation and proof as **Son of God** and Messiah *through* these two attesting tokens. **Not by water only . . . blood**—John the Baptist came **by water only;** not also **by blood.** His **water** would have been of no avail but for the Propitiator's **blood.** It was the **blood** which, with its divine self-sacrifice by the Sufferer, and its power of propitia-

Spirit is truth. **7** For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, [m]the Word, and the Holy Ghost: [n]and these three are one. **8** And there are three that bear witness in earth, [o]the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. **9** If we receive [p]the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: [q]for

m John 1. 1; Revelation 19. 13.——*n* John 10. 30.

o Rom. 8. 16; Heb. 6. 4.——*p* John 8. 17, 18. *q* Matt. 3. 16, 17; 17. 5.

tion, gave all the value to the **water.** The Greek prepositions here before **water** and **blood** are neither **by** nor *through*, but are expressively changed to *in* with the article: *in the* **water** and *in the* **blood.** Our apostle beholds the mystical *coming*, the coming as of his person, enveloped *in* these elements. **Spirit... witness**—At his baptism the descending **Spirit,** in form as a dove, identified him as the Son in whom God was "well pleased." The same **Spirit** was secured by his death to be the witnessing heritage of the Church, commencing his work on the memorable day of Pentecost. **Spirit... truth**—The **Spirit** is not only *true*, but is very **truth** itself, as God is very **love** itself. It is **the Spirit** whose testimony gives force to the tokens, **water** and **blood;** which elevates and transforms them into **witness;** by which means the *witnesses* are **three.**

7. **For**—Scholars are agreed, at the present day, that this entire verse and the words **in earth** in the following verse are not genuine; being a late interpolation and not the words of St. John. They are omitted in all Greek manuscripts previous to the sixteenth century; by all the Greek fathers, and by many of the Latin fathers. They are omitted in the early editions of the Latin Vulgate. The text was never used by the Orthodox fathers of the early Church in defending the doctrine of the Trinity against Arius. That doctrine was established in the Church without any aid from this text. It is not needed for that purpose now, and it cannot be justifiably quoted as proof in that discussion.

8. **And... witness**—Literally, *And three are they who bear witness.* It is remarkable that the words **three** are masculine, implying persons, and **one** is neuter, implying thing or substance. It is not without a shadow of reason, therefore, that Augustine found an indication of the Trinity in the words. Very similar is the Greek in the words "I and my Father are one," where "one" is neuter. The **water** represents the Father, the author of our regeneration; the **blood** represents the propititiating Son; and these, with **the Spirit,** ever witness in the world to the Messiahship of him **that came.** And as **the Spirit,** so the **water** and the **blood** are ever present witnesses in the Church through the sacraments of baptism and eucharist. **Agree in one**—Literal Greek, *these three are into one.* The *three* persons converge into a *unit.*

It can hardly be doubted that there is an intended correspondence between these words and those in John xix, 34, 35. John there states, with great emphasis, that he beheld and **bare record** to the marvellous fact that **blood and water** came forth from the Saviour's side. It is obvious that he viewed that **water** and **blood** as witnesses to the fact that the dying Jesus was truly a Saviour, both by atoning **blood** and by purifying **water.** Similarly striking are the Baptist's words attesting the Spirit's testimony of the divine Sonship. "I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." John i, 34.

From all this we derive a solemn proof that the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are a perpetual institution of the Church, **bearing record** with the Spirit that Jesus is our permanent propitiation and sanctification. In the eucharist we "show forth the Lord's death until he come." And the baptismal commission extended "to the end of the world." 1 Cor. xi, 26; Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.

9, 10. The surety of this august **witness** or testimony, verses 9 and 10. It is far above all human testimony, as God is above man. **Witness of men**

this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. **10** He that believeth on the Son of God [r] hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God [s] hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11 [t] And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and [u] this life is in his Son. **12** [v] He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. **13** [w] These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; [x] that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. **14** And this is the confidence that we have [1] in him, that, [y] if we ask anything according to

[r] Rom. 8. 16; Gal. 4. 6.—[s] John 3. 33; 5. 38.—[t] Chap. 2. 25.—[u] John 1. 4; chap. 4. 9.

[v] John 3. 36; 5. 24.—[w] John 20. 31.—[x] Chap. 1. 1, 2.—[1] Or, *concerning him.*—[y] Chap. 3. 22.

—On the testimony of two or three unimpeached oaths of **men** we take the life of a fellow-being by the courts. Deut. xvii, 6; xix, 15. **For**—The clause *and I say this* **for,** or *because,* is here to be mentally supplied, and the emphasis is to be laid on **God.** The testimony from Christ is from **God,** and therefore comes under the law that God's **witness** is **greater** than man's. Man may swear falsely, but God cannot be a **liar** or perjurer.

10. **Witness in himself**—As it is the **Spirit** (as noted above) which gives force and life to the **water** and **blood,** by which they become witnesses, so that **Spirit** becomes indwelling, with its three-fold testifying power, **in** the believer's soul. And as that **Spirit** is **God** and **truth,** so we have an inward surety of demonstration far above what **men** as witnesses, or narratives, can impart. The *testimony,* the **witness,** the **record,** is within us as a divine intuition, possessing the highest conceivable certainty. **He that believeth not God**—As we believe not a perjuring human **witness. A liar**—Our apostle allows not the unbeliever the chance of saying, Perhaps it is not God who testifies. It is not only a sure testimony, but it is just as sure that the testifier is **God.** If, therefore, the truth of the testimony is denied, the divine veracity is impeached. It is a personal issue between man and **God. Record**—In all these verses the word **record** and **witness** are the same Greek word, signifying *testimony,* and should have been translated uniformly.

3. The results of faith are eternal life, with present answered prayer, 11-17.

11, 12. Of this testimony, so divinely sure, we now are to have, through the rest of the chapter, the result. It is summed up in the word **life;** life **in Christ** and Christ in us, so that in us is the **life.** In the background, **death,** verse 16, and the **wicked one,** 18, and **the world,** 19, shadow a dark contrast. So we have the great antithesis, the battle-array, in which faith is the sure conqueror, verse 4, and **life,** present and future, the sure prize.

13. **Have I written**—I *wrote,* the epistolary Greek tense. A retrospective glance over the whole epistle, implying an approaching close. **Believe...know**—To awaken your belief, and show you how the **believe** may solidify into a **know. Have eternal life**—Already deposited within you, to be unfolded and perpetuated in the **eternal** future. Note on John iv, 14. **Believe**—And the **know** becomes again a permanent and realizing **believe.** The intuitive assurance itself is a ground to **believe** in the reality of the thing so *known.*

14. **This** is included in the **confidence** embraced in the above **believe** and **know.** This **confidence** is a firm feeling of the heart embodying itself in free expression. The indwelling **life** puts forth a confident utterance. **According to his will**—The utterance expresses both our **will** and God's. **Heareth us**—As we are not

his will, he heareth us: **15** And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. **16** If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and [z] he shall give him life for them that sin not

[z] Job 42. 8; James 5. 14, 15.

dumb, arising from our **life,** so he is not deaf, like the **idols** of verse 24, or like the "unknown absolute" of the pantheist. The common **life** of God and us constitutes a medium of b'essed intercommunication. Our lips are vocal and his ear is sensitive.

15. **Know that he hear us**—If we live in a consciousness that we have access to the divine ear. **We** also **know,** in spite of apparent failures, **that we have the petitions** or *askings,* either in the things themselves or some blessed equivalents. **We desired**—Rather, (in the perfect tense,) we *have* ever *asked of him.* Our askings have never been in vain, even though the specified thing has never come. They all redound upon us in divine blessedness.

16. **If**—A specific example of a prayer heard, with its possibility of apparent failure. Yet it is not only a specific instance, but it lies within the category of life, illustrating how the **life** may be conservative of **life. Sin ...not unto death**—And so the prayer accords with the divine **will,** verse 14, as it would not in the case of a **sin unto death.**

But the much mooted question here encounters us, What is this **sin unto death?** The phrase was familiar to the Jews. Upon Num. xviii, 22 the rabbies based a distinction of sins *unto death* and *not unto death.* But when the phrase is transferred to the New Testament it does not necessarily retain precisely the same import. Whitby assumes that the case supposed is that of a *sick* **brother,** smitten with a penal disease. The prayer of the faithful can raise him, unless the sin has been an irrevocably mortal one. To this Huther objects that the **death** must be the antithesis to the **eternal life** of this entire chapter, and therefore cannot be a bodily but an eternal **death.** To this objection it seems a fair reply to say, that **death** by divine penalty is truly a part of, and truly is, **eternal death.** The true refutation of Whitby we think, is: 1. That the **brother** is not seen suffering the penalty of the **sin,** but actually committing it, or *sinning* **a sin,** as the Greek literally is; and, 2. We can hardly imagine that so important a part of the condition of the **brother** as *sickness* would be left unmentioned. Huther (followed by Alford) maintains, that the **sin unto death** is such an apostasy that the brother passes from the condition of life eternal to that of the eternal death, which is its opposite, on earth. It would then seem to follow, that if we see one once a Christian actually denying Christ's mission, he is not to be prayed for.

But before giving our own conclusion let us raise the query: Does our apostle assume that it is really known whether the sin of the **brother** is a **sin unto death?** We think clearly not. For John goes on to reaffirm, as a thing they need to fully learn, that there **is** such a distinction as **unto death,** and **not.** And he gives it as an explanation *why in the case the prayer is not* (according to verse 15) granted; namely, because (according to verse 14) it was not **according to his will.** We, therefore, hold that the **sin unto death** is the "unpardonable sin," the sin against the Holy Ghost of Matt. xii, 31, 32, where see our notes. **He shall,** if he pleases, **ask;** it shall be his divine privilege. **And he shall give him life**—Grammatically this **he,** like the former, means the praying man, who *gives* by the power of prayer. But let him not charge God with unfaithfulness if the prayer fail of fulfilment, and the sinning brother prove hard and obdurate. His was then a **sin unto death;** and **life** for him was not **according to his will,** verse 14. **There is**—A deliber-

unto death. [a]There is a sin unto death: [b]I do not say that he shall pray for it. **17** [c]All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

18 We know that [d]whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God [e]keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. **19** *And* we know that we are of God, and [f]the whole world lieth in wickedness. **20** And we know that the Son of God is come, and [g]hath given us an understanding, [h]that we may know him that is true; and we are in him

a Matt. 12. 31, 32; Mark 3. 29; Luke 12. 10; Heb. 6. 4, 6; 10. 26.—*b* Jer. 7. 16; 14. 11; John 17. 9.

c Chap. 3. 4.—*d* 1 Peter 1. 23; chap. 3. 9.—*e* James 1. 27.—*f* Gal. 1. 4.—*g* Luke 24. 45.—*h* John 17. 3.

ate reaffirmation of the actuality of such **a sin.** It is reaffirmed both as a most solemn fact and as a solution of ungranted prayer. Huther correctly says that **I do not say** is no absolute prohibition. It is only a declining to advise prayer if the deadly nature were known. Let him leave that to God, pray in hope, but be not disappointed, or discontented with God, if it prove the unpardonable sin.

17. **Unrighteousness**—All wrong-doing or voluntary wrong-being. It may be an offence against man; it may be a corrupting of our own nature; it may be a small act, even a thought; but in each and every case it is appropriated by God as an offence against himself, and so is a **sin. Not unto death**—It may be a small offence, a shortcoming, a moral error, and then, though **a sin,** it is **not unto death.** There may be an underlying spirit of repentance, of elastic repellance, so that it may not forfeit our justification or destroy our regeneration. And even if it render us unregenerate, it is not, therefore, necessarily unpardonable. Repentance may restore our sonship of God.

4. Summarizing conclusion, with final admonition, 18-21.

18. **Sinneth not**—The continuous present again. For the very case presented above of a sin committed by a **brother,** which is not **unto death,** presupposes that the regenerate can and does **commit a sin.** He does not live in the practice of sin as an unregenerate does. See notes on iii, 8, 9. He does not, like the Nicolaitan, live in **unrighteousness,** and say it is not **sin.** He does not, like the regular sinner, sin without repugnance or repentance, as if it were natural and congenial to him. **Keepeth himself**—Watches and guards himself. Unless he does this he loses his regenerate character—the character incompatible with free sinning. **Wicked one**—The devil. **Toucheth him not**—Rather, gets not possession of him; that is, so long as he **keepeth himself. Keepeth** and **toucheth** are instances of the continuous present tense.

19. **We know**—Six times has the apostle pronounced this **know.** His religion is not a guess so, or a hope so, but a **know** so. And this **know** so arises from **the witness in himself,** (verse 10;) namely, the divine witness of the divine three of verse 8. There is no uncertainty about it, though **the world** deny it; for the testimony of God is greater than that of **men,** verse 9; and the testifier is the divine **Spirit,** who is the very **truth** itself, verse 6. **In wickedness**—Rather, in **the wicked one,** as it is translated, the very same Greek word, in verse 18. So the regenerate are said to be *in Christ;* so in the next verse they are said to be *in the true One.* The Church is Christ's mystical body, and *into* him every regenerate member is mystically embodied. And so in fearful contrast the unregenerate **world lieth in** the antichrist, Satan. Note on ii, 15.

20. **Is come**—Literally, *cometh.* This does not allude to any perpetual *coming* of Christ; but the present is used to indicate what takes place in the divine order. Adam falls and Christ *comes.* It refers to his first advent, as the past tense of **hath given** shows. **Him that is true**—Rather, *the true One,* God. The word **true** does not signify veracious or truthful, but *gen-*

that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. [i] This is the true God, [k] and eternal life. **21** Little children, [l] keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

i Isaiah 9. 6; 44. 6; 54. 5; John 20. 28; Acts 20. 28; Romans 9. 5; 1 Timothy 3. 16; Titus 2. 13; Hebrews 1. 8.—*k* Verses 11-13.—*l* 1 Corinthians 10. 14.

uine or real, in opposition to the **idols** of next verse, which are fictitious or unreal gods. Many of John's readers had been their worshippers, and Christ had come and given them **understanding** of the sole **true** God. **In him that is true**—*In* the true One, as if identified with and embodied in him, as **the world lieth in** the wicked one. **Even**—The Italics indicate that this word is not in the Greek, but supplied by the translators, incorrectly. The meaning is, that we are in God by being **in his Son. This...true God**—The question is, Does **this** refer to **God** or **Christ?** If to the latter, it is a strong text in proof of the divinity of Christ. Hence, as Alford affirms, the older commentators divided in their interpretations according to their doctrinal prepossessions. But later exegetes acting, like himself, from purely exegetical reasons, refer it to God—**him that is true.**

For referring it to Christ: 1. Christ is the nearest antecedent, being last named. 2. Christ is called **life,** and God never. To the first it is replied: 1. God is the main and leading subject in mind, and Christ is merely incidental, and in such cases the more distant noun is often held the true antecedent. 2. The continued epithet **true** implies the continuity of the same subject, **God.** 3. God is the more natural antithesis to **idols,** and is, therefore, the unchanged subject through both verses. To the second there seems no very clear reply; yet Alford answers: 1. By quoting John xvii, 3, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This is a striking parallel passage; yet not God, but the knowledge of God, is therein declared to be **eternal life.** 2. By saying that Christ is never called **eternal life,** but **life;** which is true, and yet **eternal life** is meant when **life** is thus predicated. On the whole, the argument is very evenly balanced, with a slight preponderance in favour of **God.** At any rate, the text cannot be quoted with any very just confidence in proof of the divinity of Christ.

21. **Idols**—As above remarked, John's immediate readers were probably expected to be mostly Gentiles brought by Christ to an **understanding** of the **true** One. They were surrounded on every hand with **idols** in Ephesus and in all Asia Minor. In Ephesus the temple of Artemis (Diana) was still standing in pride and power. Hence it became the little body of Christians, one and all, to beware of **idols.** It is the last tender warning of the venerable apostle to his **little children** at this same Ephesus, to **keep** themselves from Artemis and her images, and adhere to the **true** God **in his Son Jesus Christ.** John closes with as emphatic an abruptness as he commences this epistle. Note on i, 1. But there was a special danger arising from the seductions of the errorists condemned in this epistle; who, in fact, advocated the participating in the sacrificial banquets of the pagan temples. An idol is an image, a pretence, a phantom, an unreality, in opposition to the **true God,** (verse 20,) who is the infinite reality.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

This epistle seems to have been written by John to a Christian matron residing in Asia Minor, within the circuit of the apostle's visitations, who had been accustomed to entertain Christian evangelists on their tours at her hospitable home. From the main point this letter puts, we might suppose it to have been a sort of pendant to his First Epistle; in fact, accompanying the copy of that epistle sent to her Church. It is intended to warn the elect Kyria against the Nicolaitans, whom he brands as antichrist, and against whom the main epistle was directed. Mutual love among Christians, in common love to Christ, must firmly consolidate the Christian body with a most rigid avoidance of the truthless and sensualistic errorists. Kyria is warned to reject these dangerous emissaries of a licentious religionism from her hospitalities, lest she become involved in a supposed sympathy with their heresies and immoralities. John hopes soon to make his visitation at her Church and home, where the subject may receive a fuller discussion. He is joyous at the hearty adherence of her children to apostolic Christianity, and sends the greeting of the children of an elect sister to the elect Kyria.

A large number of able commentators have maintained that this Kyria was not an individual female, but in truth a Christian Church. And if we read it with an allegorical presupposition, the entire epistle will construe very easily in accordance with it. But the whole reads, in every word, naturally and plainly, as a private letter, and as such needs no presupposition. On the contrary, to suppose St. John wrote a letter to a Church, pastor, official board, and people—elaborately addressing them as a lady, and studiously maintaining the double meaning throughout, seems not only artificial, but nearly absurd. Suppose such a performance in real life at the present day, and it is difficult to avoid a sense of the ludicrous. The writer would be reprehended as guilty, to say the least, of bad taste, in such a display of fancy. And the bad taste would be just as evident in an ancient apostle as in a modern bishop.

Kyria, in Greek, signifies lady, and yet was sometimes used as a proper name. The adjective **elect** was also sometimes a proper name, Electa, and at first it seems doubtful which of these two words was the proper name of the lady here addressed. But that question is decided by the use of the adjective **elect** in verse 13.

THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THE elder unto the elect lady and her children, [a] whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known [b] the

a 1 John 3. 18; verse 3; 3 John 1.——*b* John 8. 32; Galatians 2. 5, 14; 3. 1; 5. 7; Colossians 1. 5; 2 Thessalonians 2. 13; 1 Timothy 2. 4; Hebrews 10. 26.

Introductory Address and Benediction, 1-3.

1. **The elder**—According to his modest custom, St. John utters not his own name, nor gives his highest title, *apostle*. He was not, like St. Paul, compelled by gainsayers to such brave self-assertion. Every body knew he was the sole survivor of the twelve, and ready to call him *apostle;* or, as he was later styled, the *theologos*, *theologian*. As every *apostle* was by rank an *elder*, so St. John, like St. Peter, (1 Peter v, 1,) styles himself by that lesser title. But while St. Peter is *a* co-presbyter, St. John is **the** presbyter; **the elder** whom all Asia Minor knew. *Elders* there were in plenty, but there was but one **the elder** in Asia. He does not call himself *episcopos*, though that term designated the same rank; because, probably, 1, that term was just beginning to be appropriated to a superpresbyterial grade of men; and, 2, the term **elder** pointed to his venerable age, and was a proper antithesis to his frequent address to his hearers, **little children.** Some scholars have drawn an argument from this title to attribute the authorship of this epistle to a certain so-called Presbyter John, who, as they suppose, resided in Ephesus at the same time with the apostle. But, 1, the existence of such a John is too doubtful to permit any reasonable critic from attributing to him any writing, or anything else; and, 2, this shadow of a John did not bear the title of *Presbyter*. That title is a mistaken later addition to his name, arising from the fact that he seems to be mentioned as one in a number of *presbyters;* but *presbyters* in the sense of early or ancient fathers of the Church. **Elect lady**—The epithet **elect** is here used, as in verse 13, as an honorary term. *Chosen* of God through a blessed faith in Christ, and so a choice one among women. Also adorning that faith with Christian graces, and so a choice one, a very **elect lady,** among Christians. But it is probable that the Greek word for **lady** here, *Kyria*, (or Cyria, like its masculine form *Cyrus*,) is a proper name. Examples of such a use are found. We would only have to print the word **lady** with a capital to preserve the double sense which, perhaps, St. John intended.

Many commentators, including Huther and Wordsworth, maintain that the word **lady** is symbolically used of a Christian Church to which this epistle was addressed. Others, that it was addressed to the universal Church under this title. It certainly can be read plausibly under either supposition. But the former of these suppositions is, we think, entirely improbable. 1. The allegorical is not to be adopted where the literal will, as in this case, suit as well or better. A Church is often signified under symbol of a woman, especially in St. John's Apocalypse: but that a letter should be addressed to a Church through its officials under the symbol of **a lady,** ingeniously carried through, is eminently unnatural. 2. The analogy of the third epistle is against the allegory. It is a simple letter addressed to a leading man in a certain Church. We may safely infer, accordingly, that this is addressed to a certain Christian woman. In one case the address is, **The elder**

truth; **2** For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. **3** [c]Grace [1]be with you, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, [d]in truth and love.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children [e]walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. **5** And now I beseech thee, lady, [f]not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, [g]that we love one another. **6** And [h]this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, [i]as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

7 For [k]many deceivers are entered into the world, [l]who confess

c 1 Tim. 1. 2.——1 Greek, *shall be*.——d Ver. 1. ——e 3 John 3.——f 1 John 2. 7, 8; 3. 11.——g John 13. 34; 15. 12; Eph. 5. 2; 1 Peter 4. 8; 1 John 3. 23.——h John 14. 15, 21; 15. 12; 1 John 2. 5; 5. 3.——i 1 John 2. 24.——k 1 John 4. 1.——l 1 John 4. 2, 3.

unto the well beloved Gaius; in the other, **The elder unto the elect lady. Children, whom**—The **whom** is, in the Greek, masculine, implying that some of the children were males; but it would also include with them females, just as our word *mankind* includes both sexes. The **whom** includes both **lady** and **children. In the truth**—With that pure and holy **love** embraced in the sphere of Christian **truth.** But especially is meant, the truth of a real personal bodily Christ, in opposition to the phantasm of the Docetæ. **All**—All Christians love all Christians. And so **all** who **have known the truth** loved **the elect lady.**

2. And **all** love her **for the** indwelling **truth's sake**; or on account of that indwelling truth. The common possession of that truth is a common ground and inspiration of mutual love. The Christian loves the Christian because he is a Christian. **Shall be...forever**—It is intrinsically a permanent possession. Yet the condition of its being retained by us is expressed in verse 9, and is implied here. It will **abide** in us while we **abide** in it.

3. **Grace...mercy...peace**—See notes on Rom. i, 7; 2 Cor. i, 2; 1 Tim. i, 2. **And from the Son**—The **Son** is here mentioned with great distinctness because the question in vital debate was as to his real personality. **In truth**—The **truth** of Christ's real and divine nature. **Love**—The vital communion of believers based on a real Christ. The **truth** recurs again in verse 4, and the **love** in verse 5.

The love and truth unfolded, 4-6.

4. **Rejoiced greatly** — Compare 3 John 3. **I found**—Either on one of his circuits through the Churches of Asia Minor, or, perhaps, on a visit of some of them at Ephesus. **Of**—Understand *some* before **of. Walking in truth**—A very expressive phrase. **Truth,** the **truth** of a real Christ and of his gospel, was the very atmosphere of light **in** which they visibly **walked.** Their association was not with errorists, nor their conduct accordant with corruptionists. Their movements accorded with Christian doctrine and purity.

5. **And now**—In view of this evidence of adherence to Christian **truth,** I **beseech** that the Christian **love** be added. **A new commandment**—See notes on 1 John ii, 7, 8. **From the beginning**—From our first listening to the gospel of **love.**

6. **This...love**—It is not a mere emotion palpitating in the breast. If genuine the **love** will be *alive.* It will shape itself into an outward **walk,** a **walk** coinciding with the divine law, or **commandment**; namely, Christ's "golden rule" of *love.* **In it...In** love.

Reasons for this beseech—the widespread of the errorists, 7-11.

The main purpose of the epistle now discloses itself—to warn the faithful **lady** and her **children** against the Gnostic **deceivers,** who were teaching a phantasm Christ.

7. **Deceivers**—Leaders into antichristian error. **Are entered into**—

not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. [m] This is a deceiver and an antichrist. **8** [n] Look to yourselves, [o] that we lose not those things which we have [2] wrought, but that we receive a full reward. **9** [p] Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. **10** If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, [q] neither bid him God speed: **11** For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

12 [r] Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak [3] face to face, [s] that [4] our joy may be full. **13** [t] The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

m 1 John 2. 22; 4. 3.——*n* Mark 13. 9.——*o* Gal. 3. 4; Heb. 10. 32, 35.——2 Or, *gained.* Some copies read, *which ye have gained, but that ye receive,* &c.——*p* 1 John 2. 23.

q Rom. 16. 17; 1 Cor. 5. 11; 16. 22; Gal. 1. 8, 9; 2 Tim. 3. 5; Titus 3. 10.——*r* 3 John 13.——*s* John 17. 13; 1 John 1. 4.——3 Greek, *mouth to mouth.* ——4 Or, *your.*——*t* 1 Pet. 5. 13.

The better *reading* is, *have gone out:* as if the **deceivers** issued from some common hive or from some common teacher or school of error. **Into the world**—*From* their headquarters **into the** broad public **world. An antichrist**—Note on 1 John ii, 18. According to St. John's use here of the word, **an antichrist** signifies any emissary from the hive of *antichristian* leaders.

8. **Look to yourselves**—Words of solemn warning, warning against the deceptions of the **deceivers. We**—The apostles by whom the true doctrine was witnessed and the true Church established. **We have wrought**—In your conversion and formation into genuine Christians. **A full reward**—For the accomplishment of your full salvation. A reading preferred by Alford substitutes *ye* for **we** in both parts of the verse.

9. **Transgresseth**—Rather, **Whosoever** *goeth before* or *leadeth.* That is, every one that sets up as leader, and **abideth not in the** realistic **doctrine of Christ. Hath not** the true **God**—Who is the Father of Christ, and of us in the gospel. **Both the Father and the Son**—The same distinctness as in verse 3, and for the same reason. The Docetist, who idealized Christ, would be prone to idealize God, and be a pantheist; or he might accept Jove, and be a pagan. But as he destroyed the true **Son,** so he destroyed the true **Father.** Christianity evaporated when Christ was idealized.

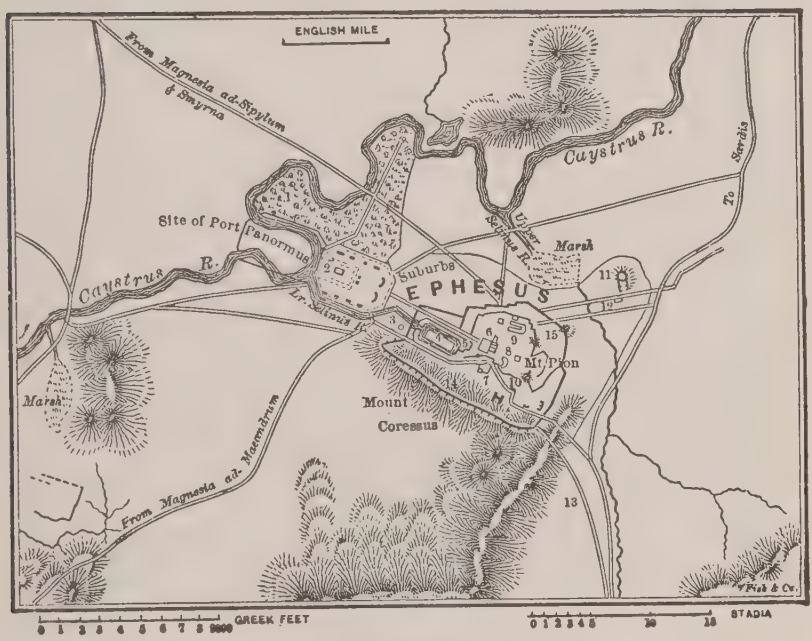
10. **If**—Caution against any apparent endorsement of the travelling emissaries of idealism. **Any**—Teacher of the phantasm. **Receive him not**—Do not entertain and maintain him as a preacher of antichristianity. It must be remembered that these antinomians were as corrupt in morals as they were false in faith. **House**—The home of the Christian **lady.** It might be the hospitable home of charity to the poor and of liberality to the itinerant preacher of the gospel, but not the dependence of the opposer and deceiver. **God speed**—A cheering wish for his success.

11. **For**—Reason for this precaution. To sustain the errorist is to be responsible for his error. **Evil deeds**—Both in destroying the true Christ and in introducing antinomianism. See note on 1 John i, 8.

Conclusion, 12, 13.

12. **Many things to write**—Compare 3 John 13. Our venerable apostle had a heart full and a head full of matter touching the pure gospel, and the infinite importance of preserving it pure for future time. The reality and saving power of Christianity for ages depended upon such preservation. **Paper**—The Egyptian papyrus. **Ink**—Made of soot diluted with water, and thickened with gum. **Come unto you**—At some near future in his apostolic visitations. Comp. 3 John 14. **Face to face**—Literally, *mouth to mouth,* in Christian conversation.

13. **Thy elect sister**—Who should these be but the **children** of the writer's deceased wife? His may be a widowed home; a home where the blessed mother of Jesus found a home; and from that home the greetings of the surviving **children** are sent. This verse is held by those who believe that the **lady** was a *Church*, to be a greeting from a Church to a Church. They hold it a strong proof of that interpretation. Alford concedes some force to the argument. But why should **children** represent one Church and **lady** the other? Why, **children**, unless because there was no mother of **the children**? To preserve the consistency of the symbol, it should read, *Elect lady, thy coelect sister greeteth thee.*



MAP OF EPHESUS.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

From the epistle itself it would appear that our apostle had sent forth from Ephesus a number of missionaries, who bore from him a letter addressed to the Church, probably of Pergamos, recommending them to reception and aid in their farther mission. They were rejected by one of the pastors of Pergamos—namely, Diotrephes—but were entertained and liberally forwarded by a prosperous and pious layman, Gaius. The missionaries on their return made a public report, narrating the health, prosperity, piety, and great and loyal liberality of Gaius. On their going forth a second time St. John sends by them *this letter* of thanks and counsel from the apostle.

The epistle suggests a significant picture of St. John's residence at Ephesus; his sending forth his missionaries aided by contributions of the Church; the general loyalty these evangelists found, varied by an occasional opponent, who repudiates the apostle, rejects his ministers, and excommunicates from his Church the adherents to the apostolic faith. To this Church, as well as to the Church to which the Kyria of the Second Epistle belonged, John expects soon to pay a visit; and in this epistle he promises at that visit to make an exhibition of his apostolic authority; so that it is to be an official visitation. The whole letter corresponds to the historic picture of John's residence and engagements in Ephesus after his return from Patmos.

THIRD EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN.

THE elder unto the well beloved Gaius, [a] whom I love [1] in the truth. **2** Beloved, I [a] wish above all things that [b] thou **mayest** prosper and be in health, **even** as thy soul prospereth. **3** For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as [c] thou walkest in the truth. **4** I have no greater joy than to hear that [d] my children walk in truth. **5** Beloved, [e] thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; **6** Which have borne witness of thy charity before the

a 2 John 1.—1 Or, *truly*.—2 Or, *pray*.—*b* Psa. 20. 15; Phil. 2. 4, 27.—*c* 2 John 4.

d 1 Cor. 4.15; Philem. 10.—*e* Matt.24.45; Luke 12. 42; 16. 10, 12; 2 Cor. 4, 1, 8; Col. 3. 17.

Notes on Third Epistle of John.

1. **The elder**—Note on 2 John 1. **Well beloved**—An epithet thrice used in the epistle, as **elect** is twice in the Second Epistle. This epithet in the Greek comes after the name, and strikingly reads, **Gaius the well beloved,** as if the epithet were a regular title. **Gaius**—Or Caius, a very common name among the Romans. There was among the followers of St. Paul a Caius of Macedonia, (Acts xix, 29;) a Caius of Derbe, (Acts xx, 4;) and a Caius of Corinth, at whose house St. Paul probably wrote his epistle to the Romans. This **Gaius** is some thirty-five or forty years later, and in Asia Minor, being in visiting distance from John, verse 14. He cannot, therefore, be probably identified with either of the other three. Wordsworth reminds us that "a Gaius was appointed by St. John to be bishop of Pergamos."—*Constitut. Apost.* vii, 46. **In the truth**—As the article is wanting in the Greek, some interpreters understand the phrase, *whom I truly love.* This makes good correspondence with **beloved.** Thou art **the well beloved,** and I love thee *in truth.* But John often omits the article where the real meaning is *the* gospel **truth,** as in verse 3.

2. **Beloved**—Commencing the real matter of the epistle with a direct address. **Above all things**—Rather, *in all respects.* **Prosper**—Literal Greek, *be in a good way.* **Health**—So that estate, body, and **soul,** should all **prosper** alike. It is a happy fact when the **soul** is the standard of the prosperity, and the other prosperities are measured up to it.

3. **For**—Giving reason for assuming that his soul was all right; namely, his accepting and aiding John's missionaries of **truth,** instead of the errorists. **The brethren came**—The missionaries sent by John, who returned from their first mission into Asia Minor, back to Ephesus, and made report. Their report in regard to their entertainment by **Gaius** was such that our apostle **rejoiced greatly.** And he was induced thereby, on their starting for their second journey, to send by them this letter to **Gaius.**

4. **My children**—This would seem to imply that John numbered **Gaius** among his own converts, and was **rejoiced** unspeakably at his constancy and zeal.

5. **Faithfully**—A faithful thing; a thing inspired by a true faith. **Brethren...strangers**—In apposition, as both meaning the same persons. The **brethren** were evangelists of John, but **strangers** to **Gaius.** He entertained them, not as old acquaintances, nor from pure hospitality in general; but because they were Christian itinerants authenticated by the apostle.

6. **Before the church**—Their **report** from their first mission was not to John alone, but **before the** metro-

church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey [3]after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: **7** Because that for his name's sake they went forth, [f]taking nothing of the Gentiles. **8** We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth. **9** I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, [g]who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. **10** Wherefore, if I come, [h]I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that

3 Greek, *worthy of God.*—*f* 1 Cor. 9. 12, 15.—*g* Matt. 20. 20, 28; Mark 9. 34; Luke 22. 24, 27; Rom. 12. 16; Phil 2. 3, 5.—*h* 2 Cor. 10. 1 11; 2 Cor. 13. 2.

politan **church** of Ephesus. So that Gaius's benefaction had gained for him an illustrious recognition. **If thou bring forward**—If on their second mission, to which I commend them in this letter. **Bring forward**—Forward them from thy home on their farther way, furnishing them counsel, guidance, and material aid. **After a godly sort**—Literally, *worthily of God*, whose ministers and revealers they are to **the Gentiles.**

7. **His name's sake**—Literally, for *the name*, **they went forth**; that is the name above every name, of Jesus. **Went forth**—As holy itinerants, commissioned by the apostle, and preaching Jesus. **Taking nothing**—Receiving no compensation, and no payment of expenses. **Gentiles**—Among whom, rather than among Jews, their course of journey lay.

8. **Therefore**—In view of their unpaid labours and need of supplies, Christians should support the missionaries if **Gentiles** or pagans do not. **Fellow-helpers**—Of the missionaries. Ordinary Christians cannot go on missions in their own persons; but they can become **fellow-helpers** by paying missionary expenses.

9. **I wrote**—Perhaps in a letter sent by these missionaries on their first tour. **The church**—Of the city where **Gaius** resided. The letter doubtless commended the missionaries to the entire Church, but met with rejection from **Diotrephes.** We suppose that in a full sense the word **church** included the entire body of Christians in the city. Yet it consisted of separate congregations, each perhaps under its own elder or pastor, and each would be called a **church.** The period of great church buildings had not commenced. One congregation would worship in a private house, (Romans xvi, 5,) another in a hired hall, (Acts xix, 9,) a third in a synagogue, (Jas. ii, 2.) But **Diotrephes,** an elder over one of these congregations, rejected the apostle's letter and authority. **Loveth to have the pre-eminence**—Literally, *making himself first.* He would be master and supreme in his own congregation. He would obey none of these mandates from Ephesus, even though from an apostle. He was an independent, a high congregationalist. Bede says, that he was "a heresiarch of that time, proud and insolent, preferring, by maintaining novelties, to usurp the primacy of knowledge to himself than to listen humbly to the ancient doctrines of John." Alford denies the possibility of his heresy, and maintains that he was simply "an ambitious man, who wished that not the apostle, but himself, should rule the Church." But certainly he would not reject the apostle but upon some doctrinal ground. And that he was tinctured with the antinomianism arising from finding all sin in matter, will appear from verse 11. **Receiveth us not**—By **us** is meant primarily the apostle himself, through his letters and messengers; yet inclusively, the whole party of apostolic Christians and Christianity.

10. **Remember his deeds**—Compare the terrible apostolic threats of St. Paul, in 1 Cor. iv, 19–21. **Prating**—The Greek word implies a certain full *flow*, or fluency, of contemptuous language. **Malicious**—Not only *has-*

would, and casteth *them* out of the church. **11** Beloved, [i] follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. [k] He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. **12** Demetrius [l] hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record; [m] and ye know that our record is true. **13** [n] I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: **14** But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak [4] face to face. Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

[i] Psa. 37. 27; Isa. 1. 16, 17; 1 Pet. 3, 11. [k] 1 John 2. 29; 3. 6, 9.

[l] 1 Tim. 3. 7.— [m] John 21. 24.— [n] 2 John 12. [4] Greek, *mouth to mouth.*

vile, but intrinsically *evil* **words. Casteth.... out of the church**—He had such a mastery over his own congregation that he was able to excommunicate the apostolic believers, in spite of such men as **Demetrius** and **Gaius** in the same or other congregations of the **church.**

11. **Beloved**—Repeated from verses 2 and 5, as now furnishing a monitory lesson from the narrative of Diotrephes's conduct. **Evil...good**—The difference between Diotrephes and the apostle was not a mere question of party, or even of non-essential doctrine, but of intrinsic goodness and badness, of holiness and wickedness. **Doeth good**—Not the falsely regenerate in evil-doing, but he that **doeth good is of God.** This clearly implies that **Diotrephes** held to a Nicolaitan regeneration, allowing of a *doing* **evil** and yet being **of God.** This was a total depravation and falsification of Christianity. **Seen God**—As he is, the truly pure **God,** seen by the spiritual eye of true faith. The holiness of the Christian is at one with the holiness of the truly holy **God.**

12. **Demetrius**—Elder or pastor, as we suppose, of another congregation of the Pergamos Church. **Of the truth itself**—He was certified by **men** as adhering to the **truth;** and the **truth itself,** by agreeing with his faith and doctrine, attested and bore **record** of his genuineness. **Our record is true**—Being that of an original witness of Christ. See our notes on 1 John i, 1.

13. **Many things to write**—Compare note on 2 John 12. **Pen**—The calamus or reed.

14. **By name**—Says Bengel, "just as if their names were written." But as John knew the Church only by occasional visitations, and is writing only a private letter, he sends greeting not to the Church generally, but only to the special **friends** whom **Gaius** well knew, and to whom he would show this epistle.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

EPISTLE OF JUDE.

Of Jude, (Greek form of name *Juddas*, Hebrew, *Juah*,) there is very little recorded history. He styles himself "brother of James,' by which we know that there are two epistles from brothers, who were also brothers of Jesus. The only mention of his name in the Gospels occurs in the list given by the Nazarenes of the brothers of Jesus, Matt. xiii, 55, and Mark vi, 3. From that remarkable passage we note something of the family of Nazareth. The brothers and sisters and father are ordinary folk in comparison with that strange phenomenon, the eldest son, Jesus. We can thence trace Jude only as one of the four brethren, collectively, whose conduct is mentioned in the Gospels and Acts, as noticed in our Introduction to the Epistle of James.

The next point of his history can be only inferred from his epistle. That brief, intensive fragment was written, probably, either in Palestine or Asia Minor. From it we learn that he is a persevering and powerful assertor of Christianity, and arraigner of the heretical demoralizers of the Church.

Of his subsequent history we have nothing but contradictory traditions. Eusebius gives a narrative of a correspondence between Jesus and Abgar, king of Edessa, the letters between whom the historian professes to have seen in the archives of that city, and furnishes a copy of them. Jesus is invited by the king to visit his capital, but declines; promising, however, that after his own death a missionary of Christianity should be sent. After his death the missionary arrived, and proved to be Thaddeus the apostle. Those who identify our Jude with Thaddeus find here a trace of his career, somewhat legendary, but with, perhaps, some historic basis. This identification, however, we do not adopt.

A more authentic narrative is given by Hegesippus, as quoted by Eusebius, of the dealing of the Roman Emperor Domitian with the grandsons of Jude. Disturbed, like Herod of old, by the reports of spies that there were descendants of David who really claimed the

throne of empire, Domitian sent an officer to bring the two descendants of "the Lord's brother according to the flesh" (as both Hegesippus and Eusebius style him) into the royal presence. The emperor asked them if they were of the line of David. Both confessed the fact. He then asked them the amount of their wealth, and what resources they possessed. They both named a few thousand denarii of money shared between them, and a few acres of ground, cultivated with their own hands, from which (an important fact to the emperor) they paid their taxes and eked out a living. Their hard hands and compact bodies fully established the truth of their statements. The emperor inquired about the Christ and his kingdom; what its nature and when it would appear. They replied that it was not a secular or earthly kingdom, but celestial and angelic; that it would take place at the end of the dispensation, when he, coming in glory, would judge the living and the dead, and give to each one according to his doings. The emperor recognised their innocence, and despised their simplicity, and thereupon dismissed them from his presence, and ceased the then existing persecution against the Christians.

AUTHENTICITY AND DATE.

Eusebius tells us, that though not recognised by some, this epistle was read in the service of most churches; a very sure test of a canonical book. The Muratorian fragment accepts its canonicity at Rome; and Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, in Africa. After the reception of the epistle in such distant quarters, one is inclined to wonder that the Peshito, at home, did not contain it; yet it was recognised by Ephrem Syrus, the greatest light of the Syrian Church in the fourth century. Considering its brevity, its lateness, and the prejudices arising, as Jerome tells us, from the apparent quotation of the book of Enoch, the testimony in favour of the book is very decisive.

From this early non-recognition of the book in Syria, there arises reason of doubt whether it was written in Palestine. Yet its entire character points to Asia rather than to Europe or Africa.

The date we think to be later than the Second Epistle of Peter, inasmuch as a state of things predicted in Peter as future is vividly painted by Jude as present. Its exhibition of the facts of the age, and in the Church, correspond more nearly with that of the Epistles of John. The heretics are in the Church, or pressing hard upon it, yet have in some cases seceded, and the whole are more or less separatists in spirit. We place it, then, after the destruction of Jerusalem. The fact that that event is not enumerated among the examples of divine judgment has no bearing, since Jude quotes none but the most ancient instances, as the Exodus, the fallen angels, and Sodom. A number of

destructions of Jerusalem had since taken place, with captivities and desolations; but none of them is mentioned. Jude deals with only examples of the most archaic character, which had long been consecrated by public thought as established monitions from God for all ages.

The later date of Jude is, we think, conclusively proved by the fact that Peter predicts the errorists as future, and Jude narrates their present existence. Peter gives the prophecy, Jude portrays the terrible fulfilment. Dr. Frederick Gardiner, in his scholarly monograph on Jude, (Boston, 1856,) takes issue with this view of the tenses of the two writers, on the grounds that Peter's are not "exclusively future." "The false teachers are described with equal clearness as already come." But, 1. While Peter's main verbs are *uniformly* future, Jude's *never* are, but are past or present. 2. In fact, Peter's entire description is of a future. Even while he uses terms in the present tense which are descriptive of objects, they are descriptive of objects he has declared to be future. His expressions of time are like this: The corruptionists *will* in due time come; and their actions and characters *are* of such and such a character. It is never once said nor meant that they *have come*. 3. Thus in ii, 1, it is said, "There *shall be* false teachers, *denying*, etc.; where surely the present participle does not vary the future of the verb. And this applies to Peter's Second Epistle throughout. On the contrary, in Jude these "men" *have* "*crept* in unawares." "These *speak* evil of things they *know* not." "These *are* spots," "*are* murmurers," "their mouth *speaketh*." St. Jude is giving a sharp sketch from present real life. His objects are *present*, both in place and time. Hence he is vivid, brief, and profoundly impassioned. And this self-consistency of Jude's in tenses, goes to justify us in saying, that, while Paul to the Ephesian elders and to Timothy, and Peter in the second chapter of his Second Epistle, predict these errorists, Jude, and John in his Epistles and in the earlier part of his Apocalypse, describe the fulfilment.

Both Dr. Gardiner and Alford found an argument for the posteriority of Peter on his greater diffuseness. The brief and more condensed must, they assume, be the original; of which the more extended must be an expansion. Why not assume the exact reverse? If Peter gave a full prediction of the future coming of the corruptionists, why might not Jude afterwards take his prediction, and by a few bold strokes—a few brief, vivid pictures, a few concentrated denunciations—describe accordantly, and often in similar terms, the present fulfilment? A condenser may just as easily omit somethings, abbreviate others, interspersing now and then a few original touches, as an expander performs the reverse feat. This we believe Jude has done. The vivid, graphic conciseness of his style, while evidently natural to his genius, are rendered still more graphic by the living presence of the characters who awaken his holy indignation.

SPECIMEN PARALLELISMS BETWEEN PETER AND JUDE.

SECOND PETER.	JUDE.
Chapter ii, 1. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you.	Verse 4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.
4. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;	6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.
6. And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;	7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.
11. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.	9. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.
12. But these, as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;	10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.
13. Spots they are and blemishes.	12. These are spots in your feasts of charity . . . clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;
17. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.	13. Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

A comparison of the above and numerous other parallel passages, induces us to say, that if Jude be the earlier, Peter seems to have copied him very unskilfully; not only expanding, but often omitting many of the happiest points, and weakening nearly all he imitates. The additional strokes which Jude furnishes are often master-strokes.

THE

EPISTLE OF JUDE.

JUDE, the servant of Jesus Christ, and [a]brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and [b]preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* [c]called: **2** Mercy unto you, and [d]peace, and love, be multiplied. **3** Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you [e]of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that [f]ye should earnestly contend for the

[a] Luke 6. 16; Acts 1. 13.—[b] John 17. 11, 12, 15; 1 Peter 1. 5.—[c] Rom. 1. 7.—[d] 1 Peter 1. 2; 2 Peter 1. 2.—[e] Titus 1. 4.—[f] Phil. 1. 27; 1 Tim. 1. 18; 6. 12; 2 Tim. 1. 13; 4. 7.

NOTES ON JUDE.

1. **Jude**—The Hebrew name *Judah* of the Old Testament becomes, in the New, the Greek *Judas*, and is abbreviated in English to this **Jude.** In the first it is the name of the greatest of the twelve patriarchs and of the twelve tribes; in the second it is dishonoured by the traitor among the twelve; but it is again made illustrious by the author of this remarkable epistle. **Servant of Jesus Christ**—Though the maternal brother of Jesus Christ, Jude shrinks with reverent modesty from holding forth that relationship. On the brothers of Jesus see our notes, Matt. xii, 46, xiii, 55, and Introduction to James. **Brother of James**—Touching the three Jameses of the Gospels, see our note on **Matt. x, 3.** This could be no other than the third **James,** resident apostle or bishop of Jerusalem, and author of the epistle. Hence we have two epistles from two maternal brothers of Jesus. **To them**—Our **Jude** addresses this epistle to the whole Church of the **sanctified.** His descriptive title of that holy body is marked by his terseness of style, and may thus be literally translated: *To those in God the Father beloved, and by Jesus Christ preserved, and* [by the Holy Spirit] *called.* We supply "by the Holy Spirit" because the trinal clauses indicate the trinal work of the three persons of the Trinity. **Sanctified,** or *made holy,* is here, in a degree, affirmed of all true Christians. They are **preserved,** not like inanimate objects, physically and absolutely, but as free agents, conditionally upon their consenting to be **preserved. Called**—With an obeyed, and so a permanent *calling.* Note on 1 Cor. i, 1; vii, 20.

3. **Beloved**—Thus far the *address;* now commences the opening of the subject. Note 3 John 1, 2. **Gave all diligence**—Rather, *making to myself all earnestness.* The *earnestness* was awakened by alarm at the inroads of the errorists. **Common salvation**—The gospel **salvation,** which was **common** to the whole Christian republic, and so threatened by a **common** danger. **It was needful**—Literally, *I had a necessity;* a *necessity* to do what, without a *necessity,* he would not advise, namely, to **contend.** There are blessed times for peace, but now comes the pressure of contest. **Earnestly contend**—A term borrowed from the palestric contests, yet also used of real battles. This spiritual contest, now at hand, required not merely quiet Christian life, but a bold maintenance of Christian truth and morals, a refutation and rebuke of error and sin, and an extrusion of the heretical transgressors from the Church of God. **The faith**—The system of doctrines and morals. **Once**—That is, once for all; excluding all additions, diminutions, and modifications; and especially such perversions as now threatened to mislead and destroy the Church. **Saints**—All true

faith which was once delivered unto the saints. **4** [g] For there are certain men crept in unawares, [h] who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, [i] turning [k] the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and [l] denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. **5** I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that [m] the Lord, having saved the

[g] Gal. 2. 4; 2 Peter 2. 1.—[h] Rom. 9. 21, 22; 1 Peter 2. 8.—[i] 2 Pet. 2. 10.

[k] Titus 2. 11; Heb. 12. 15.—[l] Titus 1. 16; 2 Peter 2. 1; 1 John 2. 22.—[m] 1 Cor. 10. 9.

Christians, especially the **sanctified** of verse 1.

4. For—Reason for this burst of alarm. **Certain men**—Not, apparently, as yet a solid body, but a large number of individual leaders scattered throughout the Church of Jude's section. **Crept in unawares**—Whose demoralizing teachings had circulated from the time of Simon Magus among the population outside of the Church. Their dogmas had streaked obscurely through the general atmosphere. But now, lo! their propagators have disclosed themselves in various quarters in the very bosom of the Church itself. **Ordained**—Fore-written or pre-described; that is, in the predictions of the apostles Paul and Peter, and in the evil types of the Old Testament, **Cain, Balaam,** and **Korah,** verse 11. Thus the ancient Greek commentator, Theophylact, pertinently says: "He calls them *fore-written* because Peter and Paul had said concerning them that in the last times such deceivers" should come. The Greek word is sometimes used in the classics to signify the publicly placarding the threatened death of a doomed individual. In this manner Sylla, the Roman consul, publicly advertised the names of persons whom he intended to execute. So the prophecies quoted by Jude were an advertisement that all those persons whose characters suited the prophetic descriptions were by those same prophecies advertised for death. **This condemnation**—The **condemnation** described in this epistle. Alford remarks, "It may be observed that the ultra-predestinarians, Beza and Calvin, find, as we might expect, strong defence for their views in their interpretation here. Beza, indeed, gathers from this place that 'this eternal decree of God comprehends not only the event, but especially the persons themselves.'" **Into lasciviousness**—Making Christianity subservient to sexual lusts. This trait identifies them with the Nicolaitans. **Lord**—Greek δεσπότης, *despotes*, whence our word *despot*. **God**—This word is rejected by the best critics as a spurious reading. It then becomes a question whether God or Christ is here designated. The word *despotes* designates God in Rev. vi, 10, and Acts iv, 24; Luke ii, 29. But in the parallel passage in 2 Peter ii, 1, it designates Christ. By the usually received doctrine of the Greek article the rendering would be *denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ*. This seems the more probable sense, as the heretics did not so much reject the true God as the true Christ.

5. Put you in remembrance—Parallel to 2 Peter iii, 1, "I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." **Once**—For all **knew,** by their early knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. The well-known truths had long slumbered in their memories, but must now be aroused to meet the crisis of their fulfilment. Jude now gives a triad of similar cases of guilt, followed by condign punishment, recorded in the Old Testament scriptures. FIRST EXAMPLE.—*The Israelite people.* **The Lord**—Here we are surprised by the fact disclosed to us by modern scholarship, that the true reading is doubtless not **Lord,** but **Jesus.** Somewhat similarly we have the unexpected *Christ* in 1 Cor. x, 2–4, and Heb. x, 28–31. Yet *Jesus* here is the more surprising as it is the more purely human name of **the Lord** than Christ. Some would read Joshua, of which Jesus is the Greek form, as in Heb. iv, 8; but Joshua did not *save* and then *destroy* the people. We have, therefore, the conclusion that to Jude, the maternal

people out of the land of Egypt, afterward [n]destroyed them that believed not. **6** And [o]the angels which kept not their [1]first estate, but left their own habitation,

[n] Num. 14. 29, 37; 26. 64; Psa. 106. 26; Heb. 3. 17, 19.—[o] John 8. 44.—[1] Or, *principality.*

brother of Jesus, Jesus was Jehovah. **Destroyed them**—For sins, and especially lusts. From the Phenicians or Canaanites came the rites of Ashtoreth, in which courtezans were the priestesses, houses of license were the temples, obscene images were the idols, and debauchery was the worship. Against this fulness of iniquity the religion of Jehovah was arrayed, and when Israel apostatized thereto Jehovah **destroyed** him. **Believed not**—Adhered not to the pure worship of Jehovah, but yielded to the seductions of idolatrous lust.

6. SECOND EXAMPLE.—*The fallen angels.* **Which kept not their first estate**—The fall of Satan is implied in the words ascribed to our Saviour, John viii, 44, that Satan "abode not in the truth," and it is symbolically predicted by him in Luke x, 18, (where see note.) It seems shadowed also in Rev. ix, 1; xii, 3–17. And these carry us back by analogy to Isaiah xiv, 12:

> "How art thou fallen from heaven,
> O Lucifer, son of the morning!
> How art thou cut down to the ground
> Which didst weaken the nations!"

Here the downfall of the king of Babylon is described as the falling of Lucifer, (light-bearer,) or the morning star, in colourings so similar, that if we suppose the writer acquainted with the history of the fall of Satan it would seem to be borrowed from that event. And so Byron addressed Napoleon in similar allusive terms:—

> "Since he miscalled the Morning Star,
> Nor god nor man hath fallen so far."

But nowhere in Scripture is this *fall* so distinctly described as here. The wars of the Titans against the gods, and their being cast down by Jupiter to Tartarus, furnished by Greek mythology, seems to be the Gentile side of the history. **Their first estate** was their primitive angelic dignity in

[p]he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness [q]unto the judgment of the great day. **7** Even as [r]Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them, in like man-

[p] 2 Peter 2. 4.—[q] Rev. 20. 10.—[r] Gen. 19. 24; Deut. 29. 23; 2 Peter 2. 6.

the regions of celestial light. **Left their own habitation**—Abandoned their princely residences, their divinely assigned sphere, in undutiful rebellion. **Hath reserved**—Instead of annihilating them. **In everlasting chains**—Not literally metallic **chains**, but *limitations* fixed upon them by divine power, excluding from the regions of glory, and fastening them in the regions of lower shade. See notes on Eph. iv, 10. **Darkness**—Murkiness, deepening in descending density. They are **under** this **darkness** because it overlies them, and though it excludes them not from the atmosphere of this earth, so but that they may roam among men, they are bound down to this lower stratum. As they left their own residence in light. God has assigned them another residence in **darkness**. **The judgment of the great day**—The Greek is without the definite article: **unto judgment of great day**; perhaps because the **day** became more definite after man became subjected to that same **day of judgment**; just as the final gehenna was "prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv, 41; where see note. And so the demons of Matt. viii, 24, feared that Jesus had come to torment them *before the time.*

7. THIRD EXAMPLE. — *Sodom and Gomorrah.* **Even as**—Rather, *how that*, to correspond with **how that** in verse 5, and depend on **put you in remembrance. Like manner**—Alford and many earlier commentators refer **like** to the **angels** of the previous verse, and make the *likeness* consist in **following strange flesh**, so that Jude is held to sustain the ancient legend, that the angels contaminated themselves with females of the human race. But unquestionably the **like** refers to the **certain men** of verse 4. To this **in like manner** corresponds the **likewise**

ner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after [2] strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. **8** [r] Likewise also these *filthy*

2 Greek, *other*.—*s* 2 Peter 2. 10.

dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and [t] speak evil of dignities. **9** Yet [u] Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body

t Exod. 22. 28.—*u* Dan. 10. 13; 12. 1; Rev. 12. 7.

of next verse, containing the reference to the same **men. Strange flesh**—Literally, *other* **flesh**; other than the "natural use" of Rom. i, 27, implying the crime which has received its name from Sodom. **Are set forth**—Literally, *lie* **forth**; lie before our eyes, both on the face of the record and on the earth's surface. **Example** — Literally, *a showing of eternal fire, suffering punishment.* The fires of ages on these plains are an illustration of eternal fire; as if the bituminous fires of the Dead Sea were a visible counterpart of the invisible fires of gehenna. The "slime-pits" of "the valley of Siddim" are recorded by successive writers as burning for centuries. In Deut. xxix, 23, they are described as "brimstone, and salt, and burning." Zephaniah ii, 9, describes them as "the breeding of nettles, and salt-pits, and a perpetual desolation." And in the Apocrypha, the Book of Wisdom says, that "even to this day the waste land that smoketh is a testimony." Even so near Jude's time Philo says, "The memorials of that terrible destruction yet remain; and ruins are shown in Syria mixed with ashes, smoke, sulphur, and slight flames still occasionally playing about, as in the remains of a conflagration. Josephus says, that in his own time "the remains of a fire, sent down from God, are yet visible." Jude, as we understand him, views the material of a perpetual fire as a visible image of the fires of eternal retribution.

8. **Dreamers**—So called for the visionary speculations out of which their profligate and fantastic systems were formed. These visions produced vices of the three following classes. **Defile the flesh**—Yielding themselves, under a pseudo-religious sanction, to gluttony, debauchery, and unnatural lust. **Despise** — Literally, abolish, make nothing of, **dominion,** lordship, authority, human or divine, civil or ecclesiastical. **Speak evil of**—Literally, *blaspheme.* **Dignities**—Literally, *glories.* The sensualist's brutal eyes degrade every noble thing they look upon. Every thing *glorious* they would bring down to their own level. And especially when they would sanctify a flagitious practice with a demoralized theory, all high and low are reversed and subverted. Legitimate lordship they repudiate, and all glories and sanctities of earth and heaven they flaunt and blaspheme with terms and phrases borrowed from their own obscene vocabulary.

9. **Michael**—Whence Jude quotes this instance is not clearly known. Origen says, it is a passage quoted from the book entitled "Ascension of Moses;" but the passage as specified by him is not the same with this of Jude. The old Greek commentator Œcumenius says, "It is said that Michael, the archangel, heaped on dust at his burial, but the devil, not agreeing to it, brought a charge against him of the killing of the Egyptian, and as on that account not worthy an honourable burial." This the commentator derived from a source not at present known. Alford quotes a Greek passage from the Catena to the following effect: "When Michael brought Moses into the mount where our Lord was transfigured, then the devil said that God had perjured himself, in bringing him where he had sworn he should never come," namely, into the Land of Promise. Dr. Gardiner has a plausible conjecture, which is in some degree sustained by this reference to the transfiguration. In that scene Moses appears in his resurrection body, and according to Deut. xxxiv, 5, 6, the place of his tomb was never known. Moses, then, like the transfigured Elijah, was really not buried, but corporeally translated; and the real

of Moses, [v] durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said,

[v] 2 Peter 2. 11.

contest which took place between Michael and Satan was whether Moses was worthy, instead of a *burial*, of a translation. It may then have been a judicial contest, as in a case of canonization; in which Satan was the prosecutor, and Michael the advocate, of Moses; and the issue was, whether Moses should have a grave or an ascension. The transfiguration, where Moses appears with glorified body, shows that Michael was victorious.

Michael is a name which does not appear in Scripture until after the captivity, namely, in Dan. xii, 1, where he stands as the champion and guardian-angel of Israel. See note, Matt. i, 20. The word **archangel** appears but once elsewhere in Scripture, 1 Thess. iv, 16, "The Lord himself shall descend...with the voice of the (rather, *an*) archangel." The pre-eminence of certain angels is implied in the apocryphal book of Tobit, where Raphael specifies himself as "one of the seven holy angels which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." As champion of the Church Michael is here, as in the Apocalypse, at issue with Satan, the "archangel ruined," who is mentioned by Jesus as "the devil" with "his angels." **Durst not**—Had not the daring. Huther says, "From reverence for the original glory of the devil;" Fronmüller retorts, "Better, from profound dread of the majesty of God." Both seem to be correct; for it was probably a judicial scene before God. As in Job, Satan appears in his official state as prosecutor, and a forensic courtesy before that tribunal of God himself is due even to that bad dignity, as well as to the divine Judge. **A railing accusation**—An "abusing of the plaintiff's attorney" is said to be the final resort of the other party's pettifogger when the facts are hard upon his client. It was not Satan who was on trial, but Moses; and, therefore, Michael need not make irrelevant allusion to the opposing counsel's unfortunate antecedents. **Rebuke thee**—As he did Satan in the previous case of Job, acquitting the accused and nonsuiting the accuser. Similar are the words of the angel to Satan in Zech. iii, 1–3, where the arch accuser is prosecuting God's high-priest. Whether the document which Jude quotes was history or prose-poem, the archangel's language repeated the words of Zechariah's angel. Nor does the historical character of the document make important difference, for the modern pulpit could as properly elucidate a moral principle from Milton as from Macaulay. When it is said that "Jude quoted an *apochryphal* document," it must be remembered that *apochryphal* means here simply the uninspired literature of the Hebrew Church. And if the book quoted was an imaginative production, its author wrote more wisely and more worthily of quotation than Milton, who makes even the angels retort "scorn for scorn." Whether we hold the Satanic scene in Job to be history or poetry, it is equally suitable for instruction.

But are we to treat Satan with courtesy? We reply, that there is a deep moral wisdom in the maxim, "Give even the devil his due." Respect is due to dignity, to position, to any excellence even in the worst character. And courtesy is due to the worst who is in the performance of a dignified office. And this, nevertheless, does not silence the voice of moral rebuke. When the dignitary puts off his dignity and becomes a buffoon, a criminal, a culprit, there is a suitable treatment for him as a buffoon, a criminal, a culprit. Dignified courts know how to treat a criminal with due respect and self-respect. When moral severity arraigns the guilty, in the true spirit either of reforming or of condemning for the warning of others, or for the public good, the plainest words of human language may be sometimes justifiably used. Of this truth, this very fragment of Jude's is a rare example. And when Jesus arraigned Satan, (John viii, 44,) truth and righteousness took precedence of

[w] The Lord rebuke thee. **10** [x] But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. **11** Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way [y] of Cain, and [z] ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished [a] in the gainsaying of Korah. **12** [b] These are spots in your [c] feasts of charity,

[w] Zech. 3. 2.—[x] 2 Peter 2. 12.—[y] Gen. 4. 5; 1 John 3. 12.

[z] Num. 22. 7, 21; 2 Pet. 2. 15.—[a] Num. 16. 1 &c. —[b] 2 Pet. 2. 13.—[c] 1 Cor. 11. 21.

courtesy. Preachers of the present day need not be afraid of this passage. It is a noble text in behalf of courtesy and moral rectitude in our forensic and judicial chambers, in our legislative and congressional halls, in our editorial columns. While just arraignments of official corruption are all-important and must never be effeminated, our courts are at the present day degraded by discourtesy, our senators bandy epithets suggestive of "honourable satisfaction," and our newspapers run riot in partisan detraction. Said the Irish orator, Grattan, "The gentleman cannot be severe without being unparliamentary; I will show him how to be severe and parliamentary too." At the present day a great public problem is how to state unflinching truth without extenuating, or setting down aught in malice.

10. And now comes a most cutting antithesis. Of the dignities and glories above them **they know not,** and such they hold in contempt; but the sensual animalities below them they do, like brutes, naturally understand, and with those they are in deep sympathy. **These**—The finger of apostolic rebuke pointing at them. **They know not**—In their animality they ignore the pure God above them, the glories of the heavenly world, the moral governmental order on earth, which faintly copies the government of God. These they appreciate not, and deny their existence, or mention them only with ridicule. **What they know**—From the fleshly impulses within. **As brute beasts**—Just as animals **understand** the dictates of their sexual and sensual nature. **Corrupt themselves**—Sinking both their intellectual and bodily systems into debasement, disease, and death, temporal and eternal.

11. The three types united in **these** men are **Cain, Balaam,** and **Korah.** The character, career, and final destiny of the three may be thus presented: **Cain**—godlessness, fraternal murder, life under divine curse; **Balaam**—licentiousness, bribetaking, slaughter in battle; **Korah**—ambition, schismatic sedition, sudden consignment to lower hades. **Woe unto them**—The menace of their final destiny is, like **Cain,** to be God-cursed; like **Balaam,** fated to slaughter; like **Korah,** bound for hades. The three verbs are in climax. **Ran greedily,** is, literally, *they were poured out* in that direction, like a stream or torrent. The climax then is, *they went, they were poured, they perished.* They imitated Cain in taking a mad career; like Balaam, they rushed headlong into licentious infamy for gain; like Korah, they rebelled against all holy authority and went down to the depths of death.

The comparison to Cain here, as in 1 John iii, 12–15, does not affirm that these men were addicted to assassination, but indicates that murderous hatred of the brethren which John typifies in these same characters by the character of Cain. In regard to Balaam, consult our note on Rev. ii, 14. The *contradiction* **of Korah,** expressed in verse 8 by **despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities,** expresses the churchly turbulence and sedition of these men. Fraternal hate, mercenary licentiousness, and rebellion against the Christian body and government, are mainly the crimes charged.

12. In the next two verses St. Jude ranges through nature, through earth, sea, and sky, for images of reprobation for the sensualistic heretics. *Rocks,* **clouds, trees, waves,** and **stars** are collected in expressive disorder of succession, to image their disorderly existence.

when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: [d] clouds *they are* without water, [e] carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, [f] plucked up by the roots; **13** [g] Raging waves of the sea, [h] foaming out their own shame;

d Prov. 25. 14; 2 Pet. 2. 13.—*e* Eph. 4. 14.

f Matt. 15. 13.—*g* Isa. 57. 20.—*h* Phil. 3. 19.

Spots—Rather, *rocks;* that is, concealed peaks or breakers on which ships are liable to wreck. The calm, sweet sea, under whose surface these treacherous wreckers were lurking, were the **feasts of charity,** the *agapæ* or *love-feasts* of the primitive Church. These were banquets after the Lord's supper, intended to promote social fraternity in the Church, and to provide a charitable meal for the indigent, who were invited to partake. Wesley's institution of love-feast was a revival of only the first of these purposes. Strange to say, these social and charitable meals could be kept pure neither from gluttony nor licentiousness, and for that reason were abandoned by the Church and prohibited by her authorities. We hope it is a proof of modern improved morality that no such facts, at our Sabbath-school excursions, picnics, and other Christian socialities, have given pain to the Church. **Feast . . . fear** — Perhaps a better rendering would be: *Carousing with you without fear, providing for themselves.* Even at a sacred feast they had no **fear** to indulge in excess and license. And by their seductions they were as *rocks* under surface, dangerous to the unsuspecting mariners. **Clouds**—Which in a dry region are a sweet promise of a falling shower; and these for awhile seemed rich with refreshing spirituality and benefaction to the Church. But, alas! they were waterless, with no reviving or fertilizing store in their bosom, and soon they are seen to be the image of fickleness and worthlessness, being the sport of the varying **winds. Trees**—Once fruitful, but now *autumnal* and stripped of fruit. The phrase, **whose fruit withereth,** simply signifies *autumnal,* and so bare of fruit and leaves. **Twice dead**—De Wette understands *doubly-dead* to be simply intensive, *utterly* **dead.** Alford and others, **dead,** first, in autumnal fruitlessness, their annual fruit-bearing energy being expended; and, secondly, **dead** by the subsequent extinction of all vitality. This describes, we may admit, doubly **dead** trees, but shows not the correspondent double death in the men typified by the **trees.** On the other hand, Stier and Wordsworth find the **twice dead** solely in the men, namely, in their original death by unregeneracy, and a second death after conversion by apostasy. This must find its correspondence in the **trees** in their original fruitlessness previous to the bearing, and a cessation of bearing by the cessation of life. We doubt whether a return to De Wette's interpretation is not best. **Plucked up by the roots**—A single word, *uprooted;* or, as the Greek, more expressively, *out-rooted.* By the Greek aorist all these verbs contemplate the operations from the standpoint of time after their completion. See note, Rom. viii, 5; v, 13. It is as if at the consummation of the whole ruin our apostle's pen describes things as past. **Plucked up**—Rent from the Church, and, their probation being closed, virtually or really, wrenched from life; no longer cumberers of the ground. Their future and final fate predicted as a past fact.

13. **Raging waves** — *Savage,* as if alive, full of furious purpose and power. **Their own shame**—The plural *shames.* The image, like that of Isaiah, "casting up mire and dirt;" the *shames* being their own brutal dogmas and feelings flung forth in shameless words. **Wandering stars**—Unknown to modern astronomy, but too well known in both ancient and modern moral experience. They are neither comets nor shooting stars; but ocularly meteors, conceptually, stars swinging from their positions, drifting from their orbits, and lawlessly **wandering** in space. These errorists, probably, once had position and orbits, but are veering farther and farther from the light

wandering stars, [i] to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. **14** And Enoch also, [k] the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, [l] the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, **15** To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their [m] hard *speeches* which ungod-

i 2 Peter 2. 17.—*k* Gen. 5. 18.—*l* Deut. 33. 2; Dan. 7. 10; Zech. 14. 5; Matt. 25. 31; 2 Thess. 1. 7; Rev. 1. 7.—*m* 1 Sam. 2. 3; Psalm 31. 18; 94. 4; Mal. 3. 13.

Blackness of darkness—An intenser expression in the English than the original. Substitute in place of **blackness,** *murkiness, gloom.* But Gardiner remarks, that the former of these two terms "is a Homeric word for the darkness of the infernal regions, and is even put for the world itself of future woe." As the meteoric star conceptually loses itself in distant and hopeless darkness, so these living wanderers will drift into a returnless destiny of ruin.

14. **Prophesied**—This word stands, in the Greek, with its particle *but*, the first word of the sentence; the place of emphasis. The emphasis implies that not only were **these** characters typified by the above-named very ancient examples, *but* they were **prophesied of** by a most ancient holy seer. **Also,** in the English, seems by its position to mean that **Enoch,** *in addition to others,* so **prophesied;** whereas it really means, that *prophecy* was by him added to the above *types.* Read, *But prophesied, also, in regard to these, the seventh one from Adam, Enoch.* **Seventh**—Including both Adam and Enoch, there were seven persons in line. There is a week, usually of days; also sometimes, a week of things; and here, a week of persons, with holy Enoch, for its holy sabbath. "The number seven was esteemed, in the ancient world, as an important signature pointing to the sacred and mystery. The fact that after sin and death had freely exerted their unhappy power during the first six generations, in the seventh generation mankind appeared in the person of one man in a state of high completeness and blessed freedom from death, has a kind of prophetico-symbolical significance, and intimates that mankind in general, after having fully completed its course and fought its battle under the oppression of sin and death, through six long world-periods, shall appear in the seventh world-period in a state of high completeness, in a more divine life and more blessed freedom from death. The seventh world-period is the kingdom of God on earth. To Adam, the first, was revealed and promised the appearance and advent of the Lord, as a Helper and Saviour; to Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was revealed the last advent of the same Lord, Helper, and Saviour as a Judge and Avenger, and he was the first prophet who spoke and taught this among men."—*Wordsworth.* **Of these**—The wickedness of these men placed them within the comprehension of Enoch's prophecy. They put themselves into the class of characters for all whom the predictions were truly intended. Through long ages the prediction extended so as to reach them; and even to reach all such impenitent transgressors, from Enoch to the present day and to the second coming of Christ.

15. **To execute judgment**—The office of judge, rather than executioner, is here described, which is performed upon **all. To convince**—To expose and convict of their sin, stripping away every excuse, and exhibiting their naked guilt. **Deeds... speeches**—The external sins alone are here mentioned as exhibitions of character. **Ungodly committed**—As an English adverb we should here have *ungodlily.* **Hard**—Hostile, unsubmissive, impenitent. **Sinners... against him**—The Greek order of words is more emphatic: *which they spoke against him, sinners, impious.* It is supposed by some that Jude here quotes an apocryphal Book of Enoch, of which Dr. Mombert says:—

"The above mentioned apocryphal

ly sinners have spoken against him. **16** These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and [n]their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, [o]having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. **17** [p]But, beloved, remember ye the words which were

[n] 2 Peter 2. 18.—[o] Proverbs 28. 21; James 2. 1, 9.—[p] 2 Peter 3. 2.

Book of Enoch was formerly known only by fragments and notices of the early Fathers, but has recently been discovered in an Æthiopic translation, and translated from the Æthiopic into German. It became known in Europe about the close of the last century. Winner, Dorner, and others, ascribe its authorship to a Jew of the first century of the Christian era; Ewald places its date at the end of the second century before Christ. A new edition and translation of this book was published by D. Dillman in 1853, who pronounces it to have been written about B. C. 110. The book consists, according to the careful investigation of the last-named scholar, of three parts: 1. The proper and original Book of Enoch, which constitutes the greatest part of this apocryphal work. 2. Of historical additions for the elucidation of several doctrines and ideas from the pen of another author, who wrote nothing afterwards. 3. Of so-called Noachian additions, connected with other interpolations made by a third author, belonging at least to the end of the first century B. C.... Considering that the variations between the epistle and the Book of Enoch are not inconsiderable, and that the Book of Enoch is not expressly cited, there is still room to doubt whether Jude knew that book. But the tradition of Enoch's prophecy he must at all events have known, and considered true as to its kernel." A late German writer, Volcmar, maintains that the book was written in the time of Hadrian, the beginning of the second century, and his argument Alford approves. In America, Stuart maintains the post-christian character of the book; and Dr. Gardiner, in a very able excursus, maintains more conclusively the same ground, denying that Jude quoted the book. Our own conclusion is, that it contains words and phrases used in a manner not found in any other pre-christian book, and the book can hardly be accepted as pre-christian. Alford says, "That the particulars related in Second Peter and in our epistle of the fallen angels, are found also in the Book of Enoch, is no proof that the writers of these epistles took them from that book. Three other solutions are possible: 1. That the apocryphal writer took them from our epistle; 2. That their source in each case was ancient tradition; 3. That the Book of Enoch itself consists of separate portions written at different times."

16. The utterers of these **hard speeches**, as such, are now more fully described. They are, namely, the seditious Korahs of the Church. **Murmurers**—Croakers against the apostolic doctrines and institutions. **Complainers**—Literally, *fate-blamers;* malcontents who rebel against their own rank and condition in the order of things and the organization of the Church. **Lusts**—Impulses of the natural man, whether sexual, ambitious, or belligerent. **Great swelling words**—The utterances of arrogance, and of assumption to being much greater and higher personages than they truly are. **Having ... admiration** — Admiring, flattering men to their *faces*, for whom they, perhaps, have no real respect. **Because of advantage** — For the sake of profit. Their **admiration** is a hypocrisy, for the purpose of gaining position, power, or compensation, through the influence of their beguiled victims.

17. **But, beloved**—Turning, as it were, his face towards the purer part of the Church. Later prophets than Enoch have described **these** men, and with a more specific designation of their time and place. **Remember ye the words**—This phrase naturally suggests spoken **words**; spoken by **apostles** whom they had, many of

spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; **18** How that they told you [q] there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. **19** These be they [r] who separate themselves, [s] sensual, having not the Spirit. **20** But ye, beloved, [t] building up yourselves on your most holy faith, [u] praying in the Holy Ghost, **21** Keep yourselves in the love of God, [v] looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. **22** And of some have compassion, making a difference: **23** And others [w] save with fear, [x] pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even [y] the garment

[q] 1 Tim. 4. 1; 2 Tim. 3. 1; 4. 3; 2 Peter 2. 1; 3. 3.—[r] Prov. 18. 1; Ezek. 14. 7; Hosea 4. 14; 9. 10; Heb. 10. 25.—[s] 1 Cor. 2. 14; James 3. 15.—[t] Col. 2. 7; 1 Tim. 1. 4.

[u] Rom. 8. 26; Eph. 6. 18.—[v] Titus 2. 13; 2 Peter 3. 12.—[w] Rom. 11. 14; 1 Tim. 4. 16.—[x] Amos 4. 11; Zech. 3. 2; 1 Cor. 3. 15.—[y] Zech. 3. 4, 5; Rev. 3. 4.

them, personally heard. **Spoken before**—Forespoken; uttered long **before** their fulfilment, and so predictive. They were *forespoken* to the Ephesian Church by its founder-apostle, Paul, in his memorable address to the Ephesian elders. Acts xx, 28–31. Also, 2 Tim. iii, 1–5; and 2 Thess. ii, 1–10. And 2 Thess. ii, 5, says the apostasy was topic of oral apostolic discourse.

18. **Mockers...walk after their own...lusts**—Same Greek words as in 2 Pet. iii, 3; where see note: yet speaking here of a different set of **mockers** or **scoffers. In the last time**—Using nearly the same words of the same verse in Peter, yet referring to a different **time.**

19. **These...separate themselves**—First demoralizing and disgracing the Church by bringing the imputation of their own vices upon it, and then distracting and dividing it by a secession, which, however, relieves it. The **same sort** of seceders as in 1 John ii, 18, 19. **Sensual**—Same word as is rendered "natural" in 1 Cor. xv, 44, and for which we coined the word *soulical*, as an exact equivalent. The word is plainly antithetical to **spirit**, as part of the trinality or three-foldness of the human constitution. **Having not the Spirit**—These men are merely *soulical:* **spirit having not.** They had body and animal soul, but they had lost their highest nature, **spirit.** This does not literally mean that a part of their human constitution had been annihilated, but *nullified;* reduced to nullity; just as we severely say that a man is *conscienceless* when his conscience seems *dead.*

20–24. A two-fold passage; *first* telling the **beloved** how to preserve themselves, 20, 21; and *second*, how they must endeavor to **save** others—even these sensualists.

20. As to **yourselves,** there must be a **building up,** instead of a tearing down, as the errorists are doing. And the four elements of this self-building are, **faith,** which must be **your** own act; prayer, which must be impregnate with the Holy Ghost, the spirit of man and the Spirit of God coöperating; **love of God,** the element in which you **keep yourselves;** and **mercy,** resulting in the sublime and divine ultimate **eternal life.**

22. The sinners to be rescued, if possible, are two classes: a **some** and an **others;** but Tischendorf makes *three* classes, including a third, who are **others** still. **Of some have compassion**—The reading followed by our translators may be rendered, *some treat with pity, making a discrimination,* that is, according to the peculiarity of each case, using severity or tenderness as the transgressor needs. But the reading preferred by scholars at the present day would be: *some who are making a dissension you must refute*, including the idea of detection and exposure.

23. **Others**—A second class. **Save**—The Greek present signifies the effort to **save,** but does not, as the aorist would, imply a sure saving result, or the absolute power to accomplish a success. **Pulling them out of the fire**—As if they were in terrible danger of being scorched and burnt by the errorists, yet could, perhaps, be res-

spotted by the flesh. **24** [z]Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and [a]to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, **25** [b]To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

[z] Rom. 16. 25; Eph. 3. 20.—[a] Col. 1. 22.

[b] Rom. 16. 27; 1 Tim. 1. 17; 2. 3.

cued with a desperate *pull*. **With fear**—Belongs to third class. Read: *Others still, compassionate* **with fear**...**hating**, etc. This third class we can only pity, with a mingled feeling of **fear** and abhorrence of their shame-bespotted characters.

The sin and danger of the three classes increase in climax. *First*, there is the set in the Church inclined to be schismatic, who must be rebuked and brought to order. *Second*, the class tending towards the vice of the sensualists, who are to be rescued with an energetic *pull* from their fatal course. *Third*, the nearly hopeless apostate, whom we can little else than pity, and from whose contaminated natures we are obliged to shrink. **Garment spotted by the flesh**—A fearful emblem of depravity. Their *tunic* or undergarment is foul with the spots of their debauchery. Rev. iii, 4.

24. *Closing doxology.* **Now**—Literally, *but*. The **now** impresses the reader as announcing the close of the train of thought and the starting of a liturgical conclusion, which is here applicable, but not the true thought of the word. The purpose is to contrast the perseverance and blamelessness of the **beloved** with the secession and impurity of the errorists. This doxology is in the spirit and style of Rom. xvi, 25. **Keep you**—Assuming it to be your purpose to be kept. For **you** many copies have *them;* and then it is a sort of closing prayer of the writer, apart, for *them*, his readers, his **beloved** brethren. But Tischendorf has **you**, which is far more natural. **From falling**—Into the corruptions and apostasies of **these** separatists. **Faultless**—Unstained from the spots of verse 23. **Before**...**his glory—Presence of**, might here be omitted, and **his glory** is almost a name for the divine Being. But the antithesis between **keep** and **present** suggests that the *keeping* is to be during our probation, and the *presenting* **faultless** is to be before the judgment throne. **Exceeding joy**—Literally, a *leaping for joy;* an exultant jubilation over an accomplished work.

25. **Wise** is to be omitted as being really inserted by copyists from the parallel passage in Rom. xvi, 27. The fourfold creational ascription of **glory** and **majesty** belonging to the divine person, and **dominion** and **power** his characteristics as divine ruler. **Now**—The best reading supplies before this **now** the clause *before all æon* or *age*. The meaning then would be, that the ascription to God is before the world's ages begun, during earthly time, and through the endless ages to come. We have, then, the threefold phases of complete eternity, *past*, *present*, and *future*.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

INSTEAD of a permanent order of prophets, as in the Old Testament, we are presented in the New, once for all, with a permanent *prophecy*. The Apocalypse furnishes us all the prediction we need during the Christian ages. It answers to the inquirer, from the primitive age to the present, the great question, "*What is the structure of the Christian dispensation from the time of its establishment even down to its emergence into eternity?*" It thence furnishes the true form of New Testament eschatology; the true order and shaping of the last events of human and earthly history within the sphere of the kingdom of Christ, from the first advent to the second. The book has been very much misinterpreted; so much so, that with some it is an established maxim that "the Apocalypse either finds its interpreter mad or makes him so." Yet it may with truth be affirmed, that all who have accepted the above eschatological view have, in the great outline, essentially agreed, however they may have varied in subordinates. The Messianic dispensation, from the time of the first advent to the second, is found by all such interpreters to consist in a series of struggles between the powers of evil and the powers of good, until the final triumph of the righteous cause. The Apocalypse has ever been, therefore, the beacon of the final subjection of the world-power to Christ. It is the book of sure hope, the charter of ultimate victory. Under this view of the book we can enter upon its interpretation with a trust that, whatever be the error of our particular interpretations, our whole cannot be far from right.

The organic structure of the New Testament, we may add, requires the Apocalypse. Without that book the New Testament is an unfinished volume; it has hardly even "a lame and impotent conclusion," but rather no conclusion at all. This is a general but strong argument against all doubts of its canonicity and of its place in the canon.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE APOCALYPSE.

The testimony to the authorship of the Apocalypse by John, on historical grounds, is early, abundant, and uncontradicted within the Church. During the first century after its publication it is either

directly affirmed to be the apostle's, or quoted as his by a dense body of writers. We may name Papias, John's contemporary; Justin Martyr, (between A. D. 139 and 161;) Melito, bishop of Sardis, (about A. D. 171;) Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, (about 180;) and Irenæus, (about 180.) Next we have Tertullian, (about 220,) Hippolytus, bishop of Ostia, (about 240,) Clement of Alexandria, (about 200,) and Origen, (about 233.) To these add Jerome, Augustine, Basil the Great, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Ambrose.

Of two of these successive witnesses we give the explicit testimony:—

Justin Martyr says: "A certain man among us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, in a revelation made to him, prophesied that those believing in our Christ will spend a thousand years in Jerusalem, and after that the universal, and, to speak comprehensively, the eternal, resurrection and judgment of all together, shall take place."

Irenæus, (whom we have elsewhere called the *grand-pupil* of John,) in numerous passages gives "John the disciple of the Lord," "who leaned upon his bosom," as author of the Apocalypse. So, speaking of the antichristic number, 666, he says that number is found "in all the good and ancient copies, and is attested by those who have seen John face to face." We see at once that Irenæus gives the testimony heard by himself of John's own personal acquaintances, who had discussed the matter of the true text with the apostle himself, and with no other John than the apostle.

It is certain that *the publication of the Apocalypse must have been an event of great public notoriety among the Churches of Asia Minor.* It came from the great survivor of the apostolic body known throughout the Christian world—the disciple who leaned upon the bosom of Christ himself. It was addressed to the seven principal Churches in tones of imperative apostolic warning. It no doubt went the public round of those seven great Churches, being publicly announced and read in their congregations. It furnished the great programme of the future of the Messianic Church. With the friends and contemporaries of John, therefore, both the authorship and date of the Apocalypse must have been matters of profound interest and perfect knowledge. It must have been an *event* for half a century. When, therefore, Irenæus tells us that his information came from John's own interviewers, we have a rarely sure authority. It is no guess, no conjecture, but an immediate knowledge. And this, be it noted, applies to our coming discussion of the date, as well as to the authorship.

An argument is drawn against John's authorship from the difference of its style from that of John's Gospel and Epistles. We discuss this

point further under the head of DATE. While it is fully admitted that the diversity of style is very great, that fact is not without its explanations, as there shown. But while these diversities are undeniable, scholars have, on the other hand, found many traces of underlying identity. These identities justify the belief that the diversities of style arise from the diversity of conditions. The identity, especially of the *theology* of the Apocalypse with that of the Gospel and Epistles, has been discussed at great length, and shown with great clearness, by Gebhardt, in his work, "The Doctrine of the Apocalypse."

In opposition to this body of early historical evidence there is nothing of a *historical* character to present. The Alogi, a small heretical sect, denied the apostolic authorship, because they held it a production unworthy of John. In the third century, Caius of Rome rejected it because he interpreted it to teach Chiliasm, that is, the premillennial advent. On the same grounds Dionysius, successor of Origen at Alexandria, and Eusebius the historian, entertained doubts of its apostolic origin. But none of these testify to the fact *on historical grounds.* Whether the book is obscure, and unworthy an apostle, or teaches erroneous doctrine, are matters of *opinion;* in which we are as competent to judge as either of these eminent scholars. Our conclusion as to the authorship is to be ruled by authentic witnesses who testify to a *fact* they know; but in regard to its worthiness or its interpretation we are not ruled by the opinions of men who know no better than we. Historically, therefore, the testimony in favour of John's authorship of the Apocalypse is not only overwhelming but uncontradicted.

DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

On the question of date the historic testimony is as unanimous as on the question of apostolic authorship. The pretence that it was written in the time of Nero or Galba has not a single testimony in all the Christian literature of the first three—we might say, of the first five—centuries. There is not a single author of the first three centuries that gives any other date than the reign of Domitian.

First comes the decisive testimony of one who certainly knew the true date, Irenæus, the grand-pupil of John, whom we have already adduced as quoting the words of the personal friends of John whom he knew. In regard to the real name symbolized by 666, he tells us: "If it were necessary for this name to be at the present time proclaimed, it would have been uttered by him who saw the apocalypse; for it was not seen a long time ago, but almost in our own generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian."

The opponents of the Domitianian date, very unjustifiably styling

this the "Irenæan tradition," heroically assume that all the other testifiers to the same date derive their knowledge of the date from Irenæus, so that the testimony of all "is reduced to the testimony of one man." Ask them for their proof of such derivation, and their helpless reply is, that "it is the same tradition." But how that proves that this "same tradition" came through the same one man, is what they can adduce nothing to show. In our remarks on Irenæus's testimony to John's authorship we noted how widely notorious both authorship and date must have been to John's contemporaries, and so the same "one tradition" must have come down to the generation of Irenæus through thousands of different channels. The so-called "Irenæan tradition" was the sole tradition of the whole Church. The foolish fable of the Neronian date has no existence in literature until the sixth century. Its revival in modern times, on the most fantastic grounds, is a discredit to biblical criticism. The real object of these pseudo-criticisms is to identify John's conception of the recovery of the beast of xiii, 1 from death with a vulgar superstition of the Roman populace that Nero, after his assassination, had a resurrection from the dead—a superstition which closer research shows really not to have existed. (See our closing notes to chapter xvii.) Against this imaginary derivation from Irenæus there are decided proofs. 1. No witness, except Eusebius the historian, refers to Irenæus as his author. 2. Variations and subordinate additions show independence of testimonies. 3. The corroborations which we shall soon give from secular history, of the Domitianian date of John's Patmos residence could not, at any rate, have come down through Irenæus.

Clement of Alexandria says, "After the tyrant died, John returned from the island of Patmos to Ephesus." Clement does not in this clause mention Domitian by name; but we know from Eusebius, who quotes these words from Clement, that Domitian was the "tyrant" that Clement meant. For Eusebius introduces the quotation by saying, that John "addressed the Churches of Asia, on his return from his banishment to the isle of Patmos, *after the death of Domitian.*"

Origen alludes to the imperial banisher of John in a remarkably similar manner: "The *emperor of the Romans*, as tradition teaches, condemned John for testifying on account of the word of truth, to the island of Patmos. And John narrates the things in regard to his testimony, not telling who condemned him, saying these words in his Apocalypse: 'I John, etc. Rev. i, 9.'" Origen here notes John's silence about his banisher, not as though it were doubtful who he was, but as a forbearance on the part of the apostle. See our note on the passage. John names his banishment, but, forbearingly, not his banisher. That Origen knew "the tradition" of Domitian there can be

no reasonable doubt; and there is no reason to suppose that he knew any other, or that any other existed. By "emperor of the Romans," therefore, he meant Domitian.

Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau, and martyr under Diocletian, third century, says, "This John saw, when he was in the island of Patmos, being condemned to the mines by Domitian Cæsar."

In the fourth century the Domitianian date is, for the first time, *apparently* contradicted by Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, who uses the phrases, "after he was ninety years old," "after his return from Patmos, which took place under Claudius Cæsar;" that is, about the year A. D. 54. On this we may note: 1. It helps not the advocates of Nero a particle. 2. It gives the name of an emperor which almost nobody advocates. 3. Epiphanius has a low character for accuracy with scholars. 4. The passage contradicts itself; for John (who is universally held as younger than the Saviour) was scarce half ninety years old in the time of Claudius. Finally, it gives nearly the true Domitianian date; for John was probably not far from ninety on his return from his banishment by that emperor. The real fact seems to be, that Epiphanius himself had the Domitianian date in view, but twice misrecollected the name of the emperor of that date.

It is not until the sixth century that the Neronian fable appears. The unknown writer of the subscription to the Apocalypse of the Philoxenian Version (Syriac) says, "The revelation which was made by God to John the Evangelist in the island of Patmos, whither he was banished by the Emperor *Nero*." A statement made for the first time six centuries after date, would be considered valueless by any critical historian. This passage, therefore, so far as this discussion is concerned, has no existence. It furnishes not the slightest proof of any existing tradition or opinion in the Church favouring that date. The ignorant writer names *Nero* just because *Nero* was, traditionally, the *standard* Roman persecutor, the first to be thought of when a persecutor is to be mentioned.

There are two remarkable passages in the early Church writers, which have been so manipulated to prove the Neronian date that it is necessary to notice them. The first is from Eusebius, who says: "It was at Rome that Peter was crucified with his head downward, that Paul was beheaded, and John was banished to the island." Now this says nothing about the *date* of the three events, but only the *place*, namely, Rome. And Tertullian: "Happy that Church in which the apostles poured forth their whole doctrine and their blood; where Peter imitated the passion of his Lord; where Paul was crowned with the martyrdom of the Baptist; and where the apostle John, after he had been immersed in hot oil and suffered nothing, was banished to the island." Not a

word is here said of date, but only of place. The locality of all these events is said to be Rome; their time is unmentioned.

DATE OF THE PATMOS RESIDENCE.

Besides these direct proofs, the records of the date of John's banishment and return even more decisively fix the date of the writing.

First, it is in Domitian's reign alone, that history finds the custom of banishing individuals for religious reasons; and it is uniformly agreed that the banished were restored at, or after, the close of his reign. Under Nero the punishment was immediate execution, not banishment. The Pagan historian of these times, Dion Cassius, says: "Nerva" (the successor of Domitian) "released those that had been condemned, and restored those that had been banished for impiety;" that is, for rejecting paganism. Eusebius, the historian, says: "They marked the time accurately, namely, in the fifteenth year of Domitian, relating that, besides many others, Flavia Domitilla, who was niece of Flavius Clemens, one of the then aristocracy of Rome, was, on account of her testimony to Christ, banished for punishment to the Pontian island." Tertullian, with a slight inaccuracy, varies from the unanimous account of all other writers, and makes Domitian restore those whom he had banished. Victorinus, in a passage above quoted, says that John was "condemned to the mines by Domitian Cæsar." Eusebius, in his *Chronicon*, says that John's banishment was in the fourteenth year of Domitian's reign. We need, however, quote no further on this point; for with the exception of the untrusty Epiphanius, who dates the banishment under Claudius, (which nearly nobody now believes,) all before the sixth century, both pagan and Christian writers, date the banishment under Domitian. But if John resided in Patmos under Domitian, he wrote the Apocalypse under Domitian.

Against the Domitianian date certain passages are quoted from the book itself; but it is fatal to this argument that it is obliged to assume certain peculiar interpretations of those passages—interpretations which are entirely inadmissible. Thus, because the city of Jerusalem and temple are mentioned, xi, 1, and the tribes in vii, 4–8, it is assumed by these interpretations that Jerusalem, the literal city, was not yet destroyed. But is it not a wonderful blunder to assume that because a thing is mentioned, it really exists at the time of mention? Is a thing never named or described after it has been once destroyed? But the use of Jerusalem and temple and tribes as apocalyptic symbols, no more proves the literal existence of the city than the descriptions of Babylon prove that that great capital then existed in all its power and glory. See our notes on those two passages.

Another equally fallacious argument is derived from the assumption

that the "beast" of xiii, 1, etc., represents Nero. It is assumed that the "kings" of xvii, 10 are Roman emperors; and, counting in Julius Cæsar, who preceded Augustus, the sixth who now "is" would be Nero. (See our notes.) Then the date of the book must be under Nero, and the wounded head must be identified with Nero's suicide. It is, in fact, to maintain this fabulous identification, that the historical proofs of the Domitianian date are so unscrupulously outraged by the false "criticism."

The earlier date has been, finally, deduced from the strong and youthful style of the Apocalypse. There is confessedly a great difference in style between the Apocalypse and John's Gospel and Epistles. From this marked contrariety one class of critics has denied that both were by the same writer; and others would infer that the Apocalypse was much the earlier written. The answer to either one of these two inferences would refute the other.

It is admitted that the style of the Apocalypse is much more rhapsodical, abounding in Hebraisms, solecisms, and defiances of grammatical rules. The Gospel and Epistles, as exhibiting more Greek culture and a calmer spirit, are plausibly inferred to be the later productions. Yet this single difficulty cannot be allowed to invalidate the solid historical demonstrations, both that the Apocalypse is John's and that it was written late in life. An illustrative parallel may be drawn, as one instance, from the case of Thomas Carlyle. Early in life his biography of Schiller was written in chaste, calm, Addisonian English; but with this his history of the French Revolution and all his other later productions stand in most violent contrast. It was in his mature life and old age that his style grew bold and wild, and often grotesque and paroxysmal. There was not only the appearance of two contrasted styles, but of two very opposite minds. The one was the style of the pure quiet thought of the age of Queen Anne, the other was steeped in the most intense and turbulent spirit of modern Germany. Now John's Gospel and Epistles were written in his best Greek to win his Ephesian audience to the history and doctrines of Jesus. On the contrary, in the Apocalypse he is an emulator of the prophets of the Old Testament. His soul as well as his style is Hebraized. Both from the mental frame into which his inspiring theme wraps him, and from set purpose, he forces and tortures language to express his colossal conceptions in the grandest and most energetic forms. He does not, like Carlyle, possess himself of a new and foreign style and mind; but rather returns to the style and mind of his youth, before Grecian culture had softened his Hebraism—the era when Jesus surnamed him a "son of thunder." We do not hesitate, therefore, to recognise in the Apocalypse both the venerable age and the renewed youth of the last of the apostles.

SACRED NUMBERS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

That certain numbers have a symbolical significance is now admitted by all eminent commentators. The frequent coincidence of the same number in the numbering of actual literal objects, of course proves nothing; but when we are within the sphere of symbols, and where numbers are a matter of the author's pure choice, an element of significance found repeatedly occurring furnishes the probable reason of the particular selection. For a brief complete ascertainment of the symbols 3, 4, 7, 12, the reader is referred to our note, *Sacred Numbers*, at the close of Luke vi. Here we may first note

THE CREATIONAL NUMBER, FOUR.

The first *four* of the seven seals, of the seven trumpets, and the seven vials, are *creational;* that is, connected closely with the physical frame of the earth. See our notes. The remaining divine threes of each of these three sevens mount higher, and refer to the spiritual interests of man. The *fours* symbolize the world in the aspects of sin and woe; the *threes* present the consequent retribution and redemption. The former presuppose Adam, the fall, and the ruin; the latter auspicate Christ, the judgment, and the renovation. So also vii, 1, four angel guardians over physical objects, four winds, four corners; and, xx, 8, four corners of the earth. See following passages for enumerations of four particulars: vii, 9; viii, 5; x, 11; xi, 9; xii, 9; xiii, 7; xiv, 6; xvii, 15. To some of these instances we would not attribute a creational character, from their single intrinsic nature; but there is, perhaps, no one in which it may not well be found after the law has been ascertained by induction from a sufficient number of instances.

THE NUMBER SEVEN.

Seven is the prince of sacred numbers. That it is viewed as a combination of the creational four and the trinitarian or divine three, thus symbolizing the totality of the world and God, is clear from the seven seals, trumpets, and vials. How it dominates in the Apocalypse is shown in our note closing Luke vi, enumerating no less than fifteen series measured by that number. Dr. Pusey (Daniel, p. 167) suggests that the adoption of this number has also a basis in the development of the human bodily system. He quotes plentiful authorities showing the ancient opinion that human life advances by seven-year stages. Plutarch tells us that "Heraclitus and the Stoics say that man's perfection begins about his second seventh year." Solon has left a poem describing the seven-year advancing stages of life to the tenth, agreeing with the psalmist in his limitation; but other thinkers counted to

the twelfth, making eighty-four years the natural limit. Modern law makes thrice seven the period for attaining manhood.

But is there not another corporeal basis for the number seven? Some thinkers tell us that our seven-day period of labour and repose is the true measure suited to man's constitution. More or less would not adjust well to his nature. Our impression is, that most men feel this to be the fact. Whatever other concordant reasons there may be, then, the week has truly a fixed physiological basis. "The sabbath was made for man." It might seem, then, that the parable of the divine creational rest was framed as basis for the sabbath law in the decalogue. Whatever physical basis the seven-day cycle of the Mosaic cosmogony possesses, it seems quite clear that that cycle is prepared and adjusted for the decalogue, not the decalogue to the cycle. As man is the miniature image of God, so man's repose is miniature of God's parabolic repose, and man's little week is the miniature of God's stupendous week. Yet the week, in accordance with all these facts, has an astronomical basis in its being the approximate quarter of a month.

THE NUMBER TEN

seems to symbolize the human universality of our race, usually in its secular and even profane aspect. Ten utterances are given by Moses (Gen. i) as uttered by Elohim in bringing the world to becoming the home of man. It is remarkable that both genealogies of the race, from the creation to the flood, and from the flood to Abraham, contain ten generations. Ten were the plagues of Egypt revealing Jehovah to the profane world. Ten were the commandments, the law for all the world. Ten the toes of Daniel's image ultimately representing the nations of the world; and ten the horns of the apocalyptic beast symbolizing the same universality. Ten were the virgins of the parable representing our probationary race. *Ten* multiplied by *seven* represents a similar universality. See our introductory note to Luke x. Seventy was the number of deacons representing a universal ministry; seventy was, with the Jews, the symbolic number of the nations of the earth. *Ten* raised to a cube, and usually multiplied into some other number, serves to increase the whole number to a magnitude required by the subject. See notes on vii, 4; ix, 16; xi, 13; xx, 4.

TIME NUMBERS.

Whether the Apocalypse in its number of 1260 days uses "a day for a year," has been a much-mooted question. Symmetry requires something like such a symbolism. Where a beast symbolizes a nation, a symbolic reduction of number is required. For, how monstrous would be the making the life of a beast 1260 years! The rude pro-

portion is: As a beast to a nation so 1260 days to 1260 years. So in Ezekiel iv, 1–8 the proportion was: As Ezekiel's tile was to Jerusalem, so was a day to a year. Wordsworth rightly makes the 42 months, or 1260 days, an adverse period; but not only does this number in its various forms symbolize the adverse, but also the extension or magnitude of the period. John's great numbers are usually the exact for the inexact. Such are the 144,000 of chapter vii; the 200,000,000 of ix, 16; the 7,000 of xi, 13; the 1,000 of xx, 2. Daniel's seventy weeks were very nearly literal; the symbol existing not in the events predicted, but, if at all, only in the *weeks*, or rather, literal *heptads*. Hence both the Jewish and Christian expositors have looked for an exact period of seventy years. In the Apocalypse, however, the analogy appears to be in favour of viewing the 1260 days as an approximation to a definite period of extended centuries. See notes on xii, 14 and xiii, 5.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK.

A comparison of passages will show that John received THREE DISTINCT COMMISSIONS to prophesy, from three distinct donors, producing what may, not improperly, be styled *three apocalypses*.

The FIRST COMMISSION (i, 19) is given by Christ himself in a CHRISTOPHANY or personal appearing; and hence we have, in chaps. ii, iii, what we may call the Christophanic apocalypse.

The SECOND (iv, 1) is bestowed by a THEOPHANY, or present God; and hence we have, in iv–ix, the Theophanic apocalypse.

The THIRD (x, xi) is bestowed by a personally appearing angel, (chap. x,) and hence the remainder of the book is the ANGELOPHANIC apocalypse.

The first, or CHRISTOPHANIC part, is Christ's messages dictated to John, and addressed to the seven representative Churches of Asia, and through them to all the Churches of the Christian ages.

The second, or THEOPHANIC part, is a prophetic presentation of the then future of the Christian dispensation, exhibited not in chronological history, but in a few pictorial phases, through a cycle of six opening *seals* succeeded by a celestial *sealing*.

The third, or ANGELOPHANIC part, presents, in a fuller and more definite chronological order and completeness the same Christian dispensation, exhibiting the struggles of Christ and Antichrist, down through the days of divine triumph to the final judgment and eternity. This third part consists of the great historical Seventh Trumpet, preluded by the six previous trumpets. As a whole, the *six-seal series* and the *seven-trumpet series* go over the same cycle of time; the former by phases, the latter, first (in the six trumpets) by phases and then (in the seventh) by consecutive history. The seventh trumpet is the

true historic consecutive Apocalypse. It deals in chronological events and movements. Yet it is not so specifically minute as to mention any single human individual in history. There is no mention of Nero, nor Charlemagne, nor Napoleon, nor of the Crimean war; the curiosity that looks into the Apocalypse as a fortune-telling record of particular contemporaneous events or personages is the source of a large amount of the discredit resting on this book. Those who expect to find contemporaneous events exhibited large as life in this book forget how great a space so small a map as the Apocalypse has to cover. When Alcibiades was boasting of the large estates he was to inherit, Socrates laid before him the map of Greece, and brought him to modesty by asking him to point out his broad acres. We need a similar modesty in estimating our own magnitude in the Apocalypse.

THE PREDICTION, THE AGENTS, AND THE APPARATUS.

The object of the Apocalypse, mainly, is *prediction*. And these predictions appear in a series of pictures, or symbolical images, presented to the seer and represented to us by him in words. But a large part of the book is occupied with a description of the agents, and of the apparatus or machinery, as we may call it, by whom and by which these pictures are presented to view. These three parts—the agents, the apparatus, and the prediction—must be distinguished from each other by the reader. The agents are, Christ, God, the angel of chap. x, and various angels. The apparatus consists of the sceneries and inanimate objects, the seals, the trumpets, the vials, etc. Thus in the second part the fourth and fifth chapters are entirely occupied with the agents and apparatus and their action, by which the "seals" are to be brought out and the predictions the seals contain are to be brought to view. It is the revealed contents of the seals which are the true predictions. Very erroneous conclusions result when an agent or apparatus is mistaken for a predictive symbol. Sad errors are produced, for instance, when the angel of chap. x is taken as symbolizing an event in human history. Yet in the word *apparatus* there is no depreciation. For this part of the book is sublimely significant of the overruling providence of God in the system of the world. The Apocalypse becomes thereby a panorama, on a finite human scale, of the divine administration. The apocalyptic panorama represents the divine administration, as an orrery represents the solar system. It is a minute model of the divine government during the Messianic dispensation until it merges into eternity.

In our Commentary, while differing in some subordinate views, we agree with the body of evangelical commentators in the most important eschatological results. Rejecting the immense mass of complex in-

genuities with which the text has been overlaid by the ultra-historical school, we still gauge the progress of the world by some great epochal points, and attain a clearness in our view of the whole. Our division into Three Apocalyptic Commissions must sustain itself by the evidences of co-ordination furnished by the threefold statement and by the results. In our own explication of xiv–xvi we think the evidences will appear to most readers conclusive. Our view of the Seventh Trumpet, as furnishing a perfectly *consecutive history* to the end, we believe to be both maintainable and very important in its conclusions. Our hope, on the whole, is, that we have furnished an *elucidation*, by the light of which the book will be read by a large class of minds with easy understanding and fresh interest. Our ministry generally have almost dropped the Apocalypse from study or public use. And yet we have been impressed with the belief, that, relieved from the burdens that have been laid by complex and questionable commentary upon it, the book is full of inspiring topics and vivid illustrations for the pulpit.

ROMAN EMPERORS.

DATES OF COMMENCEMENT OF THEIR REIGNS.

B.C. 31. AUGUSTUS. Christ born, four years before the Vulgar Era.
A.D. 14. TIBERIUS. A. D. 30, Christ crucified.
37. CALIGULA. Conversion of Paul.
41. CLAUDIUS.
54. NERO—who was deposed and committed suicide. 60–62. St. James's Epistle and martyrdom. Book of Hebrews written. 66. Peter and Paul martyred.
68. GALBA—reigned six months.
69. OTHO—reigned two months.
69. VITELLIUS—reigned eight months.
70. VESPASIAN. Destruction of Jerusalem.
79. TITUS. John's three Epistles. Epistle of Jude.
81. DOMITIAN. Apocalypse written about A.D. 95.
96. NERVA. Restores John from Patmos.
98. TRAJAN. Death of John.

PLAN OF THE APOCALYPSE.

I Title of the book i, 1–3; 2. Dedication to the Churches, i, 4–8.. i, 1–8

PART FIRST.

THE CHRISTOPHANIC APOCALYPSE..... i, 1–iii, 22

1. The Christophany and first prophetic commission.... i, 9–20

2. Epistles successively to the seven churches..... ii, 1–iii, 22

PART SECOND.

THE THEOPHANIC APOCALYPSE..... iv, 1–ix, 21

I. THE THEOPHANY—GOD ENTHRONED IN STATE..... iv, 1–6

The Beasts, or Cherubim—The four and twenty Elders 7–11

II. PRELUDE TO OPENING THE SEVEN SEALS..... v 1–14

1. The book and unaccepted challenge for its opening.. 1–4

2. Challenge accepted and book taken by the Lamb.... 5–7

3. Successive songs of praise to the Lamb by beasts, elders, angels, and all creation..... 8–14

III. OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALS..... vi, 1–viii, 1

A. The Seal-Cycle.—The six-seal cycle briefly pictures the phases of the Messianic age down to the final dissolution; the seven-trumpet cycle pictures and narrates more fully the same course of time to the final judgment.

Four Creational Seals.

FIRST SEAL—**White horse of Conquest**..... vi, 1–2

SECOND SEAL—**Red horse of Carnage**..... vi, 3

THIRD SEAL—**Black horse of Scarcity**..... vi, 5, 6

FOURTH SEAL—**Pale horse—four-fold Death**..... vi, 7, 8

Three Spiritual Seals.

FIFTH SEAL—**Cry from souls under Altar=Persecution** vi, 9–11

SIXTH SEAL—**Final earthly Dissolution and Doom**..... vi, 12–17

With counter picture of celestial reward of Saints.. vii, 1–17

a. *Winds are silenced while* OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS *are sealed* 144,000..... vii, 1–8

b. *Then number of* NEW TESTAMENT SAINTS; *too great to be numbered; with song*..... vii, 9, 10

c. *Surrounding circle of* ANGELS, *with song*..... vii, 11, 12

d. ELDER'S *explanation and glorious picture of their* HEAVENLY STATE..... vii, 13–17

SEVENTH SEAL—**Issues no revelation, but inaugurates the Seven Trumpets**..... viii, 1–6

IV. The Seven Trumpets.....viii,7–xx,16

B. The Trumpet-Cycle.—As the seal-cycle pictures the Messianic age briefly, so this trumpet-cycle both *pictures* (in first six trumpets) and *narrates* (in the seventh) the same down to judgment and eternity.

FOUR CREATIONAL TRUMPETS.

First Trumpet—**Plague upon Earth, hail, and fire**..... viii, 7

Second Trumpet—**Plague upon Sea, mountain-sized fire-bolt**..... viii, 8, 9

Third Trumpet—**Plague upon Waters, star Wormwood.** viii, 10, 11

Fourth Trumpet—**Plague upon Luminaries, dimness**.. viii, 12

THREE SPIRITUAL (OR WOE) TRUMPETS.

An eagle appears and announces the three coming woe trumpets, *namely, of locust-demons,* (ix,1–11,) *war-demons,* (ix, 12–21,) *and antichrist,* (xii, 1–17.)..... viii, 13

Fifth Trumpet — **Abyssmal Locust-demons—emblems of infernal errors, lies, and vices**..... ix, 1–11

Sixth Trumpet—**War-horse demons—emblem of Christendom's wars**..... ix, 12–24

PART THIRD.

THE ANGELOPHANIC APOCALYPSE.....x, 1–xxii, 21

1. The Angelophany—**Descent of the World-Angel.** x, 1, 2

2. **He announces that in the sounding of the** SEVENTH TRUMPET **the eschatological mystery of God will be finished; that is, the trumpet will sound even to judgment and eternity**.. x, 3–7

3. **Third Prophetic Commission bestowed on John.** x, 8–11

I. Prelude to the Seventh Trumpet..... xi, 1–14

4. **An outlined ground plan of the events of the Seventh Trumpet; that is, of the whole of xii, 1-xxii, 5**..... xi, 1–13

Embracing:—

a. *The mystic Jerusalem = the pure Church ascertained by measurement*..... xi, 1–2

b. *The martyr two witnesses = the faithful few.*..... xi, 3–6

c. *Their destruction by the beast, and resurrection, triumph, and avenging*..... xi, 7–13

II. Sounding of the (*third woe*) Seventh Trumpet..... xi, 14

WARS OF CHRIST AND ANTI-CHRIST.....

[As the wars of Christ and antichrist extend from the first to the second Advent, so the SEVENTH (or THIRD WOE) TRUMPET covers the entire of that period, furnishing a consecutive HISTORY, with its regular symbolical chronology through the whole.]

Triumphant voices chant the anticipation of its contents..... xi, 15–19

Events of the Seventh Trumpet commence, extending to end of book..... xii, 1

I. PERSONALITIES OF THE WAR.

Satanophany, the Dragon incarnate in the Roman Empire.... xii, 1–4
The star-crowned woman, the Church, assailed by Dragon.. xii, 1–6
Michael her champion; firmamental war; Dragon cast to earth..... xii, 7–17
First (sea-risen) Beast = Christianized Roman Empire..... xiii, 1–10
Second (earth-born) Beast = Roman hierarchy = Clergy..... xiii, 11–13
Living Image of First Beast = the Popedom. ..... xiii, 14–18

II. EVENTS OF THE WAR.

THE THREE OVERTHROWS OF ANTICHRIST; namely, of his Capital, his Harlot, and his Armies... .....xiv, 1–xx, 3

I. FIRST OVERTHROW—of Antichrist's CAPITAL, BABYLON .....xiv, 1–xvi, 21

(The overthrow of BABYLON by JERUSALEM, three chapters, xiv–xvi. The scene of belligerent preparation is at JERUSALEM, Mount Zion, the temple.)

1. The chapter of War Menace by Jerusalem against Babylon..... xiv, 1–20

a. ANTICIPATIVE BUT INDEFINITE JOY-SONG AT JERUSALEM, ON MOUNT ZION..... xiv, 1–5
b. THREE ANGELS HOVERING OVER JERUSALEM..... xiv, 6–12
1. *First angel proclaims triumphal everlasting Gospel*..... xiv, 6, 7
2. *Second angel defines the object of these war manifestoes, Babylon*..... xiv, 8
3. *Third angel pours forth a volume of divine malediction against Babylon and her devotees for martyring the saints* xiv, 9–12
c. SKY-VISION (*over Jerusalem*) SYMBOLIZING THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON..... xiv, 14–20

2. The chapter of War Preparation (at Jerusalem) for Babylon's destruction..... xv, 1–8
The seven destroying **angels** *in* **temple**; *presented with* **vials** xv, 1–7
Depot of divine wrath—in Jerusalem **temple**..... xv, 8

3. The chapter of the Destruction of Babylon by batteries of wrath poured from Jerusalem..... xvi, 1–21

a. *The four creational vials upon earth, sea, waters, and sun*... xvi, 1–9
b. *Fifth vial on kingdom of the beast*..... xvi, 10–11
c. *Sixth vial on the Euphrates, for the kings of the east*..... xvi, 12
d. *The three frogs—Antichristic rally in behalf of Babylon*.... xvi, 13–16
e. *Seventh vial on the air—earthquake, crash*, BABYLON'S DOWNFALL..... xvi, 17–21

II. SECOND OVERTHROW—of Antichrist's HARLOT = the corrupt Church..... xvii, 1–18

1. Picture of the Harlot mounted on the Beast..... xvii, 1–6

2. Angel's exposition of the Beast..... xvii, 7–14

3. Exposition of the Harlot and her total destruction.	xvii, 15–18
4. Song of Triumph over the accomplished destruction of Babylon	xviii, 1–24
a. *Angelic announcement of past downfall and prospective ruin.*	xviii, 1–3
b. *Celestial rehearsal of ancient predictions now fulfilled*	xviii, 4–8
c. *Portraiture of her mercantile and commercial desolations.*	xviii, 9–20
d. *Mournful picture of her home silence and darkness*	xviii, 21–24
5. Song of triumph over destroyed harlot and coming of pure bride	xix, 1–10
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1. Descent of the Great Captain and armies of heaven.	xix, 11–16
2. Sun-angel calls the birds to a coming banquet	xix, 17–18
3. Capture and penalty of Beast and False Prophet	xix, 19–21
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RESULT OF OVERTHROWS—the thousand-year repose of victory and reign—the MILLENNIUM	xx, 4–6
New rebellion of Satan—closed by his destruction	xx, 7–10
THE FINAL JUDGMENT AND AWARDS	xx, 11–xxii, 5
1. The throne, the resurrection, and vanishing earth	xx, 11, 12
2. The final penal award—the lake of fire	xx, 13–15
3. The final glorious award—the new heaven and earth	xxi, 1–xxii, 5
a. *Visible descent of the new Jerusalem to the new earth*	xxi, 1–4
b. *Divine announcement of its blessedness and conditions*	xxi, 5–8
c. *Description of the heavenly city*	xxi, 9–27
d. *Its river and tree of life—Close of Apocalypse*	xxii, 1–5
EPILOGUE—Four attestations to this Apocalypse	xxii, 6–20
1. *By* ANGEL, *briefly reiterating the divine endorsement*	xxii, 6
2. *By* JOHN, *recapitulating God's sending angel and his own over-reverence to him*	xxii, 6–9
3. *By* GOD, *realizing the judgment as immediate*	xxii, 10–15
4. *By* JESUS, *reaffirming his own coming, denouncing corrupters of the record*	xxii, 16–19
John's final welcome to the coming—BENEDICTION	xxii, 20, 21

THE

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

CHAPTER I.

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, [a]which God gave unto him,

a John 3. 32; 8. 26; 12. 49.

CHAPTER I.

1. Title of the book, 1-3.

1. **The**—In modern style the *first three verses* would have been printed on a first title-page, with verse 3 for the author's motto, and with names of publishers at bottom. Verses 4–8 are the dedication, namely, to the seven Churches. At verse 9 begins the Apocalypse proper. Like most title-pages, this was apparently written after the book was finished, and it informs us how the writer came by its contents.

Revelation, or *Apocalypse*, means, literally, an *unveiling* or *uncovering*, namely, of some hitherto hidden or unseen object. The conception is, that St. John's perceptions were so supernaturalized that the hidden things of God's administration could be made bare before his eyes, as in a moving panoramic representation. It was a **revelation of**, that is, *by*, **Jesus Christ** as its immediate bestower. And that not only from his self-revelation in the Christophany of 9–20, but also from his *conquering*, (v, 5, where see note,) as Mediator, to open the seven seals, without which no disclosure could be made. **God gave**—The theophany of chaps. iv and v explains this **gave** by showing God upon the throne, with the whole apparatus of revelation, yet not allowing the seals to be opened except to the adored and all-meriting Lamb. **God**, therefore, **gave** this **revelation unto him** as part of his winnings through his death and mediation. **To show**—*To exhibit;* for as John **saw** the unveiling, (verse 3,) so to show unto his servants things which [b]must shortly come to pass; and [c]he sent and signified *it* by

b Chap. 4. 1; verse 3.—*c* Chap. 22. 16.

it was Christ's purpose through him to have it exhibited to all. **His servants** — The seven Churches and the universal Church by them represented. For as Christ gave through John, so John gives through his apostolic seven the unveiling to the ecumenical Church So this revelation comes from God, through Christ, through the angel, through John, through the seven, down even to us. **Shortly come to pass** — *Shortly*, by the arithmetic of eternity. See note on 2 Pet. iii, 8. The same note of immediateness at close of verse 3, and in xxii, 20. Düsterdieck decides that "the evasion that the **shortly** should be reckoned the divine mode of computation, according to St. Peter's words, is contrary to the context," but gives no reason. Hengstenberg gives for the same decision the reason that when God speaks to man, he must speak in a human manner. Therein he contradicts St. Peter, who, *on this very point*, declares that God does speak to man according to a divine arithmetic. Alford here fairly breaks down. Through his whole commentary he stiffly maintains that all such expressions mean that the New Testament writers thought and said that the second advent would be in their own day. With this view we have taken issue at passsage after passage. At last, when he comes to the Apocalypse, he happily turns about and takes precisely our own grounds. Pity he could not have sponged out his previous notes. **By his angel**—Doubtless the interpreting **angel** of xvii, 1, 7, 15, who appears also at xix, 9; xxi, 9; xxii, 1, 6. This last text nearly repeats the

his angel unto his servant John: **2** [d] Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things [e] that he saw. **3** [f] Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for [g] the time *is* at hand.

4 JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace

[d] 1 Cor. 1. 6; chap. 6. 9; 12. 17; verse 9.—[e] 1 John 1. 1.—[f] Luke 11. 28; chap. 22. 7.

[g] Romans 13. 11; James 5. 8; 1 Peter 4. 7; chapter 22. 10.

words here, and adequately explains them. The idea of some commentators that there was an attendant exhibiting angel from the beginning to end is not implied in the words.

2. **Bare record**—An obsolete phrase used elsewhere in translating John for *testified*. **Word of God...testimony of Jesus**—The Apocalypse (as affirmed by the first words of verse 1) comes first from God as his revealing **word**; it is then **the testimony of Christ**, as to the character and final results (eschatology) of his Messianic age. **All things**—Literally, *whatsoever* **things**. **Saw**—The unveiling and exhibition of the predictive moving panorama was what John **saw**. And hence repeatedly verbs of *seeing* are used in regard to it both by John and the earliest Christian writers.

3. **Blessed**—A beautiful and solemn warning to his readers, both of his own and subsequent ages. At the same time, it expresses his own solemn reverence for his own work. Blessing and woe are dependent on the spirit in which the truths of this book are read and reduced to practice. [See malediction at xxii, 18, with note.] Similar benedictions, with a **blessed**, recur in our Apocalypse, xix, 9; xx, 6; xxii, 14. The nature of that blessedness to the apocalyptic *conqueror* appears by anticipation in ii, 7, 11, 17; iii, 5, 12, 21. **He that readeth...they that hear**—One public reader and a congregation of hearers. See our vol. iii, p. 5. For beyond question our **John** expected that his apocalypsis would be received as a divine authority by his sevenfold circle of Churches, would be *publicly read* in the public congregation, would be deposited in their archives, and would be a thing of perpetuity until the **great white throne** of chap. xx should appear. And so these seven Churches did receive it. They received it as the work of no other **John** in existence would be received. **Keep those things**—Square their lives according to their requirements. Awful is the weight with which our Seer presses his work upon the spirit and heart of his audience. No woe is, indeed, here announced; but the **blessed** is pronounced with a solemn implication that acceptance before the **white throne** is fearfully conditioned upon a deep obedience to the requisitions of the book that predicts its future appearance.

2. The dedication to the Seven Churches, 4–8.

4. **John**—Adverse, and we may add, *perverse* criticism asks, If this were truly St. John, why does he nowhere style himself *apostle?* We reply that he does not write himself *apostle* just because he *was* St. John. There may have been, in the seven Churches, many Johns, but everybody knew that to the Churches there was but one **John** in Asia. Had any other John than he attempted thus to address, admonish, rebuke, command, and threaten these seven Churches, he would have gained no audience. **Seven**—The best treatise in English on the apocalyptic numbers is in Stuart's first volume, largely taken, with due credit, from Bähr, a condensation of which we have given at the end of our notes on Luke vi.

It has been argued that the Apocalypse was written at an early date, because this address shows that there were as yet but seven Churches in Asia. It might as well be assumed that but "seven trumpets" were sounded because but seven were within reach. Seven Churches, like numerous other apocalyptic sevens, are selected under the symbolic seven-form law that rules

be unto you, and peace, from him [h] which is, and [i] which was, and which is to come; [k] and from the seven spirits which are before his throne; **5** And from Jesus Christ, [l] *who is* the faithful witness, *and*

[h] Exodus 3. 14.—[i] John 1. 1.—[k] Zechariah 3. 9; chapter 3. 1; 4. 5; 5. 6.

[l] John 8. 14; 5. 36, 37; 1 Timothy 6. 13; chapter 3. 14.

in the book. Says Stuart: "Whether the Churches of that day, in Asia, were limited to that number is a question easily solved; for in Col. iv, 13 the Church at Hierapolis is mentioned in connexion with that at Laodicea, and the former is in the neighbourhood of the latter. Colosse also was in the immediate neighbourhood of Laodicea. So, in a few years later than when the Apocalypse was written, we know there were large and flourishing Churches in Tralles, where Ignatius lived, and at Magnesia in its neighbourhood, both in Lydia, and but a moderate distance from Ephesus." Stuart, be it remembered, maintained the Neronian date of the Apocalypse, but he here fully refutes those who maintain that early date on the ground that there were as yet but seven Churches in Asia when the book was written. **Asia**—Proconsular **Asia**, so called because ruled by a Roman proconsul at Ephesus. Matthew Arnold, in a note to one of his poems, says: "The name Europe (Εὐρώπη, *the wide prospect*) probably describes the appearance of the European coast to the Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor, opposite. The name of Asia, derived from ἄσιος, *fatal*, again comes, it has been thought, from the muddy fens of the rivers of Asia Minor, such as the Cayster or Mæander, which struck the imagination of the Greeks living near them." Proconsular Asia, as may be seen upon our map, embraces the three provinces of Mysia, Lydia, and Caria, bordering upon the Hellespont. The seven Churches were mostly in Lydia. The different extensions of territory covered by the term **Asia** are thus well defined by Elliott: "The word Asia was used by the Romans in four senses: 1. For the whole Asiatic continent, as opposed to Europe and Africa; 2. For Asia Minor in its largest sense, including Cilicia and other districts beyond the Taurus; 3. For the same in its smaller sense, embracing only the provinces within the Taurus; 4. For *Lydian Asia*, or, as it was called towards the end of the first century, *Proconsular Asia*, extending along the coast from Pergamos to Caria, and inland to the Phrygian frontier, or a little beyond it. **Grace...peace**—This Pauline form of benediction was familiar both to Ephesus and the other Asiatic Churches from the epistles of that great apostle, and John's adoption of it clearly indicates that there was no antagonism between the two apostles and their friends, as was imagined by such writers as Baur and Renan. **Is...was...to come**—The threefold divisions under which our minds are obliged to think all time, and so used to express the eternity of **Him.** The threefold phrase expresses the import of the word JEHOVAH. The elevation of the prophetic style induces the seer to refer to this name for God; and from the reverence with which the utterance of the divine name was avoided by the Jews, he gives the import, and not the name itself. The phrase, though dependent on the preposition **from**, is sacredly preserved by John as a *nominative*, thus attaining an expressive emphasis above the ordinary rules of grammar. **The seven spirits**—Stuart and others maintain that these are "the seven presence angels," in regard to which see our note on viii, 2. But it seems inadmissible to make **grace and peace** proceed from mere creatures, and that in position between two of the persons of the Trinity. As **seven** is the number of completeness, the one spirit is styled seven in allusion to the perfect manifoldness of his operations. The one Spirit is the **seven spirits**, as the one atmosphere is "the four winds." These **spirits** do not "stand" before Him, like serving waiters or watchers, as viii, 2: they **are before his throne**, as also is the Lamb.

the [m] firstbegotten of the dead, and [n] the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him [o] that loved us, [p] and washed us from our sins in his own blood, **6** And hath [q] made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; [r] to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. **7** [s] Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and

[m] 1 Cor. 15. 20; Col. 1 18.—[n] Eph. 1. 20; chap. 17. 14.—[o] John 13. 34; 15. 9; Gal. 2. 20.—[p] Heb. 9. 14; 1 John 1. 7.

[q] 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9; chap. 5. 10.—[r] 1 Tim. 6. 16; Heb. 13. 21; 1 Pet. 4. 11; 5, 11.—[s] Dan. 7. 13; Matt. 24. 30; 26. 64; Acts 1. 11.

5. **The faithful witness**—Through whom, and *attested* by whom, all revelation comes from God to man, especially this *apocalypse*, whose seals are opened by his conquering power. This **witness** is **faithful** to give us truth alone. The word **witness** is a favourite term both in the Apocalypse and John's Gospel and Epistles. It implies, not merely revelation, narrative, but—as in a permanent contrast with unbelief—a *testimony*, a strong, sure, reliable *attestation*. **Firstbegotten of the dead**—As the *firstborn* was the chief among his brethren, so this might mean that Christ was chief of all risen from the dead, and leader of the resurrection. So Rom. viii, 29, "firstborn" or *chief* "among many brethren." It implies, also, priority of time; for though Lazarus was raised from the dead, yet he died again, and his rising was no part of the one great organic resurrection to immortal life. So that he was truly "the firstfruits of them that slept," in order of time. The conception that the grave is the earth's womb, (as Alford,) from which the dead are born into life, is in the very dim background, as in all such expressions as used by the Hebrews. Note on Eph. ii, 2, 3. On the difference between the phrases "*from* the dead," and **of the dead,** see note on Luke xx, 35. **Prince**—Leader or ruler. **Of the kings**—Lord of the resurrection in the world to come; Lord of all authority in the present world. **Unto him**—To this double Lord of both worlds, who, supremely King himself, has made us to be a *kingdom*. **That loved us**—True reading, and more expressive, **that** *loveth* **us**; for his *love* is an ever present and perpetual thing; whereas the **washed** was a past and transient deed. For λούσαντι, **washed,** another reading is λύσαντι, *released, redeemed.* The former is both the better supported and the more expressive term; and corresponds most strikingly with **blood.** The powerful image of washing the soul in blood, gives a vivid idea of the power of the atonement as working both our justification immediately, and our sanctification mediately, by the Spirit purchased for us at the price of the **blood.**

6. **Kings**—True reading, *a kingdom.* We are already a kingdom in this world, by an unseen realm, to become a fuller *kingdom* in the revelation of a future and more real world. So Exod. xix, 6, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." And by the present passage, the saints are a *kingdom* by being **priests unto God.** Their rule is the supremacy of holiness. Their priesthood consists in their direct access to God by the sacrifice of the heart. They need no human mediator, no other offering than the affections of the soul. **To him**—This ascription of **glory and dominion for ever** presupposes true deity. **Be**—Implying both affirmation of the attributes, that they *are*, and consent and will, that they *shall* belong to him, both ratified by a solemn **Amen,** signifying both *so it is*, and *so be it.*

7. **Behold**—Even while he speaks the advent is for a moment visible to his raptured eye. **He cometh**—The immediate present; **he** comes this moment. In prophetic conception our seer brings the *coming* before his own eyes, and depicts its circumstantials. For a moment the far-distant event, so often spoken of as nigh at hand, is visibly present. Compare Matt. xxiv, 30. **With clouds**—In clouds would simply describe his high locality; **with clouds** implies that the **clouds** are part of his attendant pomp. **Every eye**—Carries the visible fact to every single individual of the human race. **Shall see**—Declares the visibility of his real living

[t] they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

[t] Zech. 12, 10; John 19. 37.

8 [u] I am Alpha and Omega, the be-

[u] Isa. 41. 4; 44. 6; chap. 2, 8; 21.6; 22. 13.

person. **And**—Rather, *even*. Even the very men whose thorns, nails, and spear, **pierced** him on the cross, shall now behold him on the throne. The nature of this striking climax, that objectively the worst sinners of the race—his crucifiers—must now face him, requires a literal interpretation. His physical crucifiers, and not only those who spiritually crucify him by their sins, (which would include all sinners,) must be meant. John watched the piercing of the Saviour's side by the soldier, and recognised the *piercing* of Jehovah in Zech. xii, 10 as finding a fulfilment in this piercing of Jehovah-Jesus. It would be such a fulfilment as could be used as illustration for a believer, but not as evidence to convince a sceptic. See our notes of John xix, 34–37. Zechariah makes the Jews look in penitence upon him they have pierced; John gives the severe weeping, equally true, of the impenitent meeting the Judge when penitence is too late. The passage is a clear proof that the Gospel and Apocalypse are by the same John. In confirmation of this, Alford notes, that the Greek word for **pierced** is the same in both Gospel and here, though not in the Septuagint. Düsterdieck replies that other translations into the Greek than the Septuagint, as those of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, use John's word. But neither of these was, like the Septuagint, in common use; and the plain fact that this passage amplifies the passage in the Gospel with marked peculiarities, still remains. **Kindreds** (tribes) **of the earth—Of the earth,** is usually an adverse phrase in this book, and doubtless here means the tribes of the earthy. Düsterdieck refers **they which pierced him** to the Jews, and these **kindreds** to the Gentiles. **Even so, Amen**—Yes, so be it. The **even so** translates the Greek, and **Amen** transfers the Hebrew form of the same word. Solemn assent is given by both even to the tears and terrors of the guilty.

8. **I...the Lord**—*God* should be

VIEW OF PATMOS FROM THE HARBOUR.

[On the left is seen a hill near the water, surmounted with windmills and chapels. Several other chapels appear at different elevations on the rocks. The town is in the central part of the engraving. Half way down the hill is seen the Apocalyptic Hermitage or Grotto. Above the Grotto appears part of the paved road from the harbour to the town.

ginning and the ending, saith the Lord, [v] which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

9 I John, who also am your brother, and [w] companion in tribulation, and [x] in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, [y] for the word of God, and for the testimony

[v] Verse 4; chap. 4. 8; 11. 17; 16. 5.—[w] Phil. 1. 7; 4. 14; 2 Tim. 1. 8.

[x] Romans 8. 17; 2 Timothy 2. 12.—[y] Chapter 6. 9.

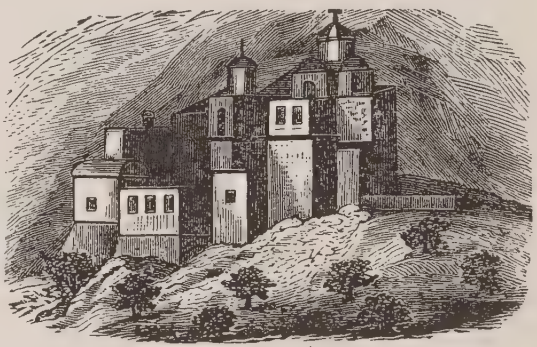
added as the true reading. **The Almighty**—Who speaks here, God or Christ? The words seem to mean the former, the close connexion with the preceding verse suggests the latter. Most certainly there is no other utterer than **he** that **cometh,** in verse 7. We must, therefore, find that it is Christ who speaks: yet Christ reinforced by, identified with, and speaking for, the whole Trinity. See note on xx, 12. Stuart cautions us against adducing this as a proof text in favour of the divinity of Christ. We think it one of the most trinitarian texts in the New Testament. **Alpha and Omega** — The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and so expressing the literal thought "**the beginning and the ending,**" which by a false reading is wrongly found in this verse, transferred from xxi, 6, where it rightly belongs. So the rabbinical Jalkut Rub., fol. 147, says, "Adam transgressed the whole law, from Aleph to Tov."

PART FIRST.

THE CHRISTOPHANIC APOCALYPSE, i, 9–iii, 22.

The Christophany, and first prophetic commission, 9–20.

The Apocalypse proper now commences. St. John gives a narrative of the first Christophany, or appearance of Christ to him, 9–11, describes his person, 12–18; and recites his own commission, from the Saviour received, 19, 20. This is the first of John's three commissions; the second is at chapters iv, v; the third at chapter x; forming the threefold Apocalypse.



THE APOCALYPTIC HERMITAGE OR GROTTO.

9. **I John**—After the "I Daniel," of Daniel vii, 28; ix, 2; x, 2. So the Apocalypse is a carrying out and completion of the prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. And thus he equalizes himself to the prophets of the Old Testament, assuming that his book is to take a parallel canonical stand; an assumption impossible to be successful for any one but an apostle. **Your brother**—For he had no need, like Paul, to thunder forth his apostolic title after his name. **Tribulation...kingdom...patience** — Between the two sad words **tribulation** and **patience** the joyous word **kingdom** bravely sparkles forth. It is a **kingdom** in the midst of sorrow and struggle. It is a reminder of triumph and power in the very centre of trial. The **tribulation,** or persecution, is in these sad days the condition of the present **kingdom,** and the **patience,** the firm persistence, is the condition of its fuller final realization, to which John's whole Apocalypse points and at last attains. **Of**—True reading, *in* **Jesus Christ. Was in the isle**—Literally, *became* **in the isle.** How

VIEW OF THE ISLAND OF PATMOS,

At six leagues distance to the S. W. The Apocalyptic Monastery of St. John is seen surmounting the distant heights represented in the central part of the view.

MAP OF THE ISLAND OF PATMOS.

[References.—1. Port of La Scala; 2. Port of Sapsila; 3. Port Gricon; 4. Port Merica; 5. Small Western Creek: 6. Port of Diacorti; 7. Town and Monastery of Patmos; 8. Cave of the Apocalypse. Below Figure 8 is traced the paved road from the harbour to the town on the hill, leaving the Apocalyptic Grotto, or cave, on the left hand.]

of Jesus Christ. **10** [z]I was in the Spirit on [a]the Lord's day, and heard

z Acts 10. 10; 2 Cor. 12. 2; chapter 4. 2; 17. 3; 21. 10.—a John 20. 26; Acts 20. 7; 1 Cor. 16. 2.

he *became*, by whom sent, he forbears to mention. Clement and Origen call the sender "the tyrant:" and all the early Christian writers named no other than Domitian. But no resentful feeling prompts John to say more than that he *became* there. **Called Patmos**—Commentators agree that the word **called** indicates the entire obscurity of this island-rock before this Apocalypse covered it with a solemn glory. Well known islands, like Crete and Cyprus, have no such prefix. **For the word...testimony**—**For** means, *on account of;* and the words unquestionably signify that John *became* in Patmos in consequence of his maintaining God's **word** and Christ's **testimony** to the world. It is true the same words in verse 2 designate this Apocalypse, just because this Apocalypse is the continuance and reproduction, in written form and in new spirit, of that same **word** and **testimony** which he had heretofore maintained at the expense of exile.

10. **Was**—*Became*, again; the word designates his transition. **In the Spirit**—Spirit-wrapt. Compare iv, 2; xxi, 10. If the man's own **spirit** were meant, we might suppose the thought to be that the consciousness had ascended from the lower ground of sense, and so mounted into the spirit as to be in communication with the spirit world. But the divine **Spirit** is doubtless meant; and the thought is, that the human spirit is *in* the divine Spirit as in a divine atmosphere, in which things of the spirit world are seen, known, and uttered. So, "How then does David *in spirit* call him Lord?" Matt. xxii, 43. "No man speaking by (Greek *in*) the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed." 1 Cor. xii, 3. In that supernatural state a mental production is put forth impossible to the same man's natural powers alone. This Apocalypse is, indeed, the product of John's mind, yet of his mind raised into a higher spiritual atmosphere. As in a divinely inspired waking dream, he thinks through a series of divine conceptions with an immediate spontaneity. The conceptions are divinely suggested to his mind, and so are, by him, thought and recorded. Under divine stimulation the language of his narrative, save where reciting the words of others, is his own. **The Lord's day**—A phrase parallel to "the Lord's supper," 1 Cor. xi, 20, (where see note,) and similarly indicating that the institution was established by our Lord. See our notes on Mark ii, 27; John xx, 26; Acts xx, 7; 1 Cor. xvi, 2.

The early Christian writers applied the word *sabbath* to the Jewish Saturday-sabbath, and called the Christian sabbath "**the Lord's day,**" yet without thereby admitting that the **Lord's day** was not the decalogue *sabbath*. It was of the heretical sect of Ebionites that Theodoret said, "They keep the sabbath according to Jewish law, and sanctify the Lord's day in like manner as we do." Says Stuart: "A party in the Christian Church adhered to this usage so long and so tenaciously that finally the Council of Laodicea (about A. D. 350) made a decree that "Christians should no longer keep the seventh day by refraining from labour." The Church historian, Eusebius, who had all the Christian literature on the subject at command, is quoted by Stuart as saying, in his commentary on Psalm xcii: "The Word," (that is, Christ,) "by the new covenant, translated and transferred the feast of the sabbath to the morning light, and gave as the symbol of true rest—namely, the Lord's day—the first day of the light in which the Saviour . . . obtained the victory over death, etc. On this day . . . we assemble, after an interval of six days, and celebrate the holy spiritual sabbath; even all nations redeemed by him throughout the world, and do those things according to the spiritual laws which were decreed for the priests to do on the sabbath . . . . All things whatever that it was their duty to do on the sabbath, these we have

behind me [b]a great voice, as of a trumpet, **11** Saying, [c]I am Alpha and Omega, [d]the first and the last: and, What thou seest, [e]write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

b Chapter 4. 1.—*c* Verse 8.—*d* Verse 17.

e Deut. 31. 19; Isa. 30. 8; Jer. 30. 2; Heb 2. 2

transferred to the Lord's day, as more appropriate to it, because it has a precedence, and is first in rank; and more honourable than the Jewish sabbath. It is traditionally handed down to us, that we should meet together on this day; and it is ordered that we should do these things announced in the Psalm." **And heard behind me**—This sublime Christophany must dawn upon St. John gradually, lest he be fatally overpowered, as in fact he was laid by it **as dead.** Verse 17. He first only *hears*, and that a voice, loud, indeed, but **behind** him. He turns, and the **candlesticks** first are seen, and then the radiant person. **A great voice**—Not the voice of Christ, as appears by iv, 1; where see note, and also x, 4.

11. The words **I...and** inclusive, are here a spurious reading. The voice does not as yet announce who is the speaker. St. John hears his commission, but is not yet told who commissions him. **What thou seest**—This Christophanic commission includes only the revelations of the first three chapters. **Write in a book**—A *volumen*, or parchment or papyrus *roll.* **Seven Churches...in Asia**—When the sons of Japhet, our Aryan ancestors, first emigrated westward from the fertile regions of the Euphrates, they found no fairer clime than in this land of Ionia. Here settled the sons of Javan, the fourth son of Japheth, and in the beautiful language formed by their genius—the Greek—Ionia is but a varied form of Javan, just as Hellas, the name of European Greece, is but a form of Elisha, the oldest son of Javan. This was the land of Homer and Herodotus. The soft clime rendered the Ionians gentle, refined, and brilliant, but too effeminate. So when, five centuries before Christ, the great Cyrus led his conquering legions westward, all Ionia submitted for centuries to the Persian sway. But when, three centuries before Christ, Alexander the Great, from European Greece, marched to the conquest of Persia and settled forever the superiority of Europe over Asia, Ionia easily accorded with this new Greek supremacy. And when, in the first two centuries before Christ, the Roman arms from still farther west spread their power over the known world, Ionia readily accepted their government. When Christ came, and Paul came proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, and when Timothy came, and an apostle John came, flourishing Churches, among which were these **seven,** were, in spite of persecution, established. When Rome, under Constantine, became nominally Christian, and Constantinople was by him built, paganism gradually disappeared, and Ionia became Christian. A Christian literature sprung up, and great Christian councils were here held. But in A. D. 1453 the followers of Mohammed took Constantinople. The Turks became masters, and from that time the Christianity, the civilization, the prosperity of the land perished. It is now, with few exceptions, a scene of semi-barbarism, stagnation, and decay. A glance at our little map will show reason for the order of the names of **the seven Churches.** From the metropolitan **Ephesus,** northward some fifty miles, is **Smyrna,** and more than fifty miles farther northward is **Pergamos,** or, according to the most authorized form of the name, *Pergamum.* This is the northernmost point. Thence southeastwardly in succession are the other four Churches. Hengstenberg suggests, and we adopt the suggestion, that this was the usual order of St. John's apostolic visitations; such visitations as are indicated in 2 John 13 and 3 John 10, and also in the account

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being

of his apostolic circuits after his return from the isle of Patmos.

to which it belongs, but can be perfected by nothing; which is most pure

MAP SHOWING THE SITUATION OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

12. **See the voice**—An expressive solecism: not, as Hengstenberg, that the word **see** is used in a "larger sense;" but the **voice** being all he as yet knows, he turns to **see** into what embodiment it will shape itself. **Being turned**—In position to receive the Apocalypse that summons him. **Candlesticks**—Why does he see the **candlesticks** before he sees even the **sun-bright face** (verse 16) of the divine Person? We think the Person, at first unseen, grew gradually visible, and is traced by St. John's words as he gleams successively into view; the radiant clearness of the **countenance** (ver. 16) being the last fully recognised. **The Son of man** comes first in his **trumpet-like voice,** next in his visible tokens, last in his glorious Person. Happy those to whom he comes with a **fear not!** verse 17. **Golden**—Says Cocceius, (quoted in Latin by Trench,) "Gold in figures and symbolical expression signifies that which is most precious of all things; which perfects all and liable to no change, and experiences no harm from time, or fire, the consumer of all things." Hence these **golden candlesticks,** as well as, throughout this book, "*the* golden girdle," i, 13; *golden* crowns," iv, 5; "*golden* vials," v, 8; "*golden* censer," viii, 3; "*golden* altar," viii, 3; "*golden* reed," xxi, 15; "city of pure *gold*," xxi, 18; the street... "pure *gold*," xx, 21. This symbolism, Trench notes, rested not upon the mere costliness of that material. "Throughout all the ancient East there was a sense of sacredness attached to this metal." Thus "golden," in the Zend-Avesta, is throughout synonymous with heavenly and divine. So also in many Eastern lands, while silver might be degraded to profane and every-day uses, it was not permitted to employ gold in any services except only royal and divine. **Candlesticks** — These so-called candlesticks were **lamps,** with oil and a wick inserted. The candelabra of the temple had three lamps on each side

turned, [f]I saw seven golden candlesticks; **13** [g]And in the midst of the seven candlesticks [h]*one* like unto the Son of man, [i]clothed with a garment down to the foot, and [k]girt about the paps with a gold-

[f] Verse 10; Exodus 25. 37; Zechariah 4. 2.—[g] Chapter 1. 1.

[h] Ezek. 1. 26; Dan. 7. 13; 10. 16; chap. 14. 14.—[i] Daniel 10. 5.—[k] Chapter 15. 6.

and one at the centre, making seven. A lamp-vessel represents a Church, the oil the grace of God, and the blaze the light with which the Church illuminates the world. The temple candelebra represented the Jewish Church in its organic unity; but these seven separate **candlesticks** represent the individuality of the Churches; yet the number seven suggests completeness, uniformity, and oneness. And this accordance of the seven Churches with the sevenfold candelabra demonstrates that the number is selected for symbolical reasons, and not because there were but seven Churches in Asia.

BRONZE LAMP AND STAND. FROM POMPEII.

13. **In the midst**—The candlesticks were so arranged that this **One** could be, and (ii, 1) could **walk, in** their **midst.** That would seem to imply that they stood in two rows, of three and of four, as the seven cities somewhat irregularly did, as seen upon our map. **Like...man**—So Dan. vii, 13, with which compare John v, 27. John recognises, even in this his glorification, his identity with the **man** of his humiliation. So our own resurrection bodies, in all their glorified changes, will manifest their identity with our present selves. See note, 1 Cor. xv, 44. In the sublime description of the Christophanic person that follows, Hengstenberg, and still more Trench, are extreme in finding out symbols of wrath and destruction. Their points we shall notice in the progress of our notes. But surely there was no reason why the Lord, in his interview with the beloved apostle and visitation of his circle of Churches, should put on the tokens of vengeance. Nor is such St. John's idea. His description presents the intense dazzling *glory* of the Lord's celestial body, too transcendent for mortal eye to bear; but that glory, though dread, is serene and merciful.

Trench, also, acutely draws a contrast between the Grecian representations and the Oriental; to the latter of which this and other of St. John's pictures belong. The former is predominantly *æsthetic;* presenting *beautiful* models for the artist. The latter are deeply significant, often a collection of expressive but crudely adjusted symbols, incapable of being wrought into agreeable picture. The many-breasted Diana was a personation made of symbols, and so, disagreeable to sight. And so this present figure, wrought into painting, would be unsightly. There is great truth in Trench's distinction; but not, we think, in its application to the present description. The personation could not be painted, for the very object is to image forth a *supernatural* splendour and glory. The splendour consists largely of an intensity of colouring to which the materials of art are inadequate. An artist could form a distinct and splendid conception of the figure, but would at once say that it was beyond and above reducing to picture. But we hold that, viewed as a work of descriptive art, this piece is congruous and æsthetically magnificent. **Clothed...to the foot**—John first discerns the main person, almost completely enveloped in a priest-

en girdle. **14** His head and [l] *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and [m] his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; **15** [n] And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. **16** [p] And he had in his right hand seven stars: and [q] out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and

[l] Dan. 7. 9.——[m] Dan. 10. 6; chap. 2. 18; 19. 12.——[n] Ezek. 1. 7; Dan. 10. 6; chap. 2. 18.——[o] Ezek. 43. 2; Dan. 10. 6; chap. 14. 2; 19. 6.

[p] Verse 20; chapter 2. 1; 3. 1.——[q] Isaiah 49. 2; Ephesians 6. 17; Hebrews 4. 12; chapter 2. 12, 16; 19. 15, 21.

ly-royal robe flowing to the feet. **A golden girdle**—Again implying highest nobility, binding—not the loins, as if engaged in a task of labour—but the *breasts*, uniting the robe in a composed dignity, as he walked or stood.

14. As (verse 16) his *face* was like the **sun**, so this **sun** bore a "corona" of **hairs** of dazzling whiteness. **White like wool**—But that is not quite white enough, and so **as snow.** The whiteness is not indicative of age, but, like the whiteness of the priest's robe, of purity, and of that celestial lustre characterizing the whole figure. See note, ver. 16. **Eyes...fire—Fire**, we are told, denotes wrath, and so these **eyes** denote flaming wrath—for which there is no demand. How often does love find **fire** in the eyes of its object, and admiration find **fire** in the eye of genius. These are celestial **eyes**, beaming, burning, blazing with divine brilliancy; clairvoyant to look with omniscience into and through all visible things. In reality, however, the intensity and power of the eyes are simply in keeping with the supernatural splendour of the whole figure, stature, hair, and voice.

15. Passing down his priestly-royal robe from his head to his **feet**, we are again dazzled with the splendour. They are **like unto fine brass** melted into a white heat **in a furnace.** How uncouth is Hengstenberg's quotation from Bengel! "This has respect to his great power, with which he brings all under him, as with *a bar of metal* burning hot," etc. But his **feet** are not said to be **brass**, but only **like brass**; and that not in solidity, being melted, but in their intensity of colouring and splendour. The apparent fusion of the brass negatives the "bar;" and may represent that molecular mobility by which the resurrection body is in every element at once indestructible and yet flexible and transformable at will. See note, 1 Cor. xv, 44. They once were flesh; they are now transfigured into an immortal nature, of which the blazing furnace can alone suggest the radiance. The Greek compound word for **fine brass**, used here and at ii, 18, *χαλκολίβανον*, is thought to be a term originated by John. Of what term affixed to **brass** the compound consists, scholars are doubtful. Salmasius and Ewald find the compound to be *furnace brass;* Bochart, *white brass*, alluding to the white heat; but most probable of all seems *Lebanon brass* or **fine brass**, first brought from Mount Lebanon, and thence generalized in meaning to mountain brass; an explanation furnished by the old Greek commentator Arethas, and sustained by the Syriac and Ethiopic Versions. **Voice...many waters**—Symbol of majesty and power, referring, rather, to the flow of torrents than to the waves of the ocean. The entire imagery suggests superhuman grandeur of size, and requires a correspondent power of voice.

16. **In his right hand**—In verse 20 it reads *ἐπὶ*, *upon* **his right hand.** The **in** suggests the idea of retention, the *upon*, of support. Both together suggest the hand outspread, with the stars, of course of small diamond-like size, resting upon the palm. **Seven stars—Stars** are an ordinary symbol for rulers. **Mouth...twoedged sword**—Some commentators seem to entertain the crude conception that this **sword** was seen as a stiff, steel fixture projected from the Lord's mouth! We view it as his divine and powerful *breath*, making itself, as it were, visible, often darting forth and brandishing in sword-like motion and form. Its active motion is described as *ἐκπορευομένος*, *going forth* — emanating in incessant flashes. So Heb. iv, 12: "The word of

[r] his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength. **17** And [s] when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And [t] he laid his right

r Acts 26. 13; chap. 10. 1.—*s* Ezek. 1. 28.

t Daniel 8. 18; 10. 10.

God is...sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The contents of the seven epistles display this powerful searching operation of this discriminating and sword-like word. See our note on 2 Thess. ii, 8. So in Hosea vi, 5, for Ephraim's transient goodness Jehovah says: "Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth." And so in Isaiah xlix, 2: "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword." It is remarkable that the word for **twoedged** is repeatedly in the New Testament, *twomouthed.* This, Mr. Glasgow says, refers to its "power of cutting every way." Perhaps it refers to its double power of destroying, either spiritually the old man, or corporeally the physical man. As a *word* of truth this spiritual **sword** *corrects* and converts the souls of men; as a word of retribution it destroys the bodies of the incorrigible. Note, ii, 16. See Stuart's excellent note on the passage. **His countenance**—As John gradually takes a full view of the glorious face, he is overwhelmed by its power. It is **as the sun;** not **the sun** beclouded and dim, but in its full **strength.** Compare this whole description with the scene of the transfiguration, beheld by our seer, Matt. xvii, 2, "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light," which was intended, like this, to form our conceptions of the glorified body of Christ, and subordinately of the glorified saints. We have not the gentle touches of beauty, such as would picture an Apollo, but dashes of glory, in comparison with which mere beauty is forgotten. So Daniel xii, 2, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever." Such language is above all material picture. And this same John also wrote, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii, 2; where, see note.

Let us form a mental picture of the personality described. Before the eyes of the seer stands a colossal figure, robed entirely in white, his face and feet alone bare; the former of sun-like splendour, the latter of a white-heat brilliancy. Locks of snowy whiteness crown his head. He speaks, and his words flash like a double-edged sword from his mouth, and his voice resounds through the space like many waters. He extends his arm, and on his palm is resting a circle of seven stars, and he walks majestically between two rows of lamps blazing upon their stands.

17. Saw him—Instantly as his sight takes in the whole person and the sun-like **countenance,** our seer falls **as dead;** just as he and his fellows **fell** into a stupor at the transfiguration; and just as Daniel fell into lethargy, Dan. x, 9. We all know with what tremor often the bravest man thinks of encountering even an apparition from the spirit world. The blood curdles at the idea of meeting the shade of even the dearest departed friend. Such are the dread relations in which we stand to that world into which we soon must enter. Still more dread seem to be the sensations of meeting a being in its resurrection power. **Laid his right hand upon me**—By gentle touch and voice the seer is wakened and brought into sympathy and communion with his heavenly visitant.

The divine person now (17–20) identifies himself as Jehovah-Jesus, the ever-living, who by his death and resurrection has attained dominion over the domains of death and hades. He thereupon commissions the seer for his work, symbolized by the significance of the **stars** and **candlesticks.** This self-annunciation we translate thus: Fear not! I am the first and the last and the living one; and I became dead:

hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; [u] I am the first and the last: **18** [v] *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, [w] I am alive for evermore, Amen; and [x] have the keys of hell and of death.

[u] Isaiah 41. 4; 44. 6; 48. 12; chapter 2. 8; 22. 13; ver. 11.—[v] Rom. 6. 9.—[w] Chap. 4. 9; 5. 14.—

and lo! living am I unto ages of ages; and I have the keys of death and of hades. Write, therefore, etc.

Fear not—Same consoling address as to Isaiah, vi, 7; to Daniel, x, 12; and at the transfiguration, Matthew xvii, 7. **I am the first and the last**—Jehovah's own self-assertion in Isa. xlviii, 12. "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." Also Isa. xli, 4; xliv, 6. He is **first,** as originating all things; he is the **last,** as eternal and enduring, even though all created and contingent things should fail. "First," says St. Victor, "because no God existed before me; last, because no other shall be after me."

18. **He that liveth**—With an underived essential life, the fountain of life, from which all finite life is a stream. **Was dead**—*Became* **dead.** A contradiction in terms, harmonized in the real history. **Alive for evermore**—Death shall never come into his future history. Through death he has attained a dominion over human destiny. **Keys**—The symbols of possession or authority over treasures, or cities, or kingdoms. **Of hell...death**—This reading, which is spurious, reverses the true order, which is, **death** and **hell,** or *hades,* the invisible region of departed spirits. See our note on 1 Thess. iv, 17. The words **death** and *hades* are not personifications, but designations of two realms. The realm of death includes "the pale nations of the dead," the kingdom of material graves and corpses. To hold the **keys** of this realm is to be lord of life and death. Hades is the realm of departed spirits, who wait the resurrection and judgment day. Of both these realms the dying and ever-living Christ has attained the right of lordship. Hengstenberg wishes to understand by *hades,* hell or *gehenna;* since Christ is lord of the destiny of the finally damned. But that is included in his lordship over *hades,* inasmuch as he is lord of the destiny of the dwellers in *hades.*

19 Write [y] the things which thou hast seen, [z] and the things which are, [a] and the things which shall be hereafter; **20** The mystery [b] of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, [c] and the seven golden

[x] Psa. 68. 20; ch. 20. 1.—[y] Ver. 1, 2, &c.—[z] Ch. 2. 1, &c.—[a] Ch. 4. 1, &c.—[b] Ver. 16.—[c] Ver. 12.

19. **Write**—This command naturally appears to presuppose immediate writing; precluding the notion of John's penning the Apocalypse after leaving Patmos. He is to be a recorder of speeches made. Doubtless the authority that could command the dead was competent to enable his hand to **write,** if need be, with all the rapidity and accuracy of a modern stenographic reporter. Ουν—*therefore*—is found in the Greek, in all the MSS., and in all the Versions except our English. It is an important, a hinging, word. It was for this **write** that the Christophany takes place. *Because* of my personal presentation in glorious form, and my authenticating self-annunciation, *therefore* **write. Things...seen**—The Christophany, the annunciation, and the symbols of **stars** and **candlesticks. Things which are**—The present facts and conditions of the seven Churches as symbolic of the normal condition of all Churches. **Which shall be**—The future destinies of the Churches as dependent on their present conduct. We might, indeed, suppose from the comprehensive terms of this threefold range of topics, that the whole book is here included in the commission. But the symbols of **stars** and **angels** indicate that the **things** of the seven Churches, and the constituency they represent, are alone embraced.

20. **The mystery**—The symbolical import; which is its hidden meaning, and is a **mystery** until made clear. The word is an independent nominative, having no verb; and the sentence

candlesticks. The seven stars are [d] the angels of the seven churches:

d Mal. 2. 7; chap. 2. 1, &c.

reads like a heading over the explanations of the next sentence. **Are... angels** — Without the article in the Greek. What the **angels are**, is the problem of this verse. But,

1) We may exclude their symbolizing symbolical angels, (such as the angel over fire, xiv, 18; of the waters, xvi, 5,) for **the stars** would then be a symbol of a symbol. As the **candlesticks** symbolize concrete, literal, and living Churches, so the **stars** must symbolize concrete, literal, and living rulers of those Churches.

2) The uniform use of the second person singular, both of pronoun and verb, as applied to the **angel,** strongly negatives its being a collective body of rulers of each Church, (as Hengstenberg.)

3) The notion that the angels were seven "messengers" sent from the Churches, and present with John, is inadmissible. No such messengers are otherwise hinted at; and the writing to them an epistle, each, implies their being at a distance.

4) The *legatus ecclesiæ*, or delegate of the Church, (held to be symbolized by Vitringa,) was the overseer of the services of the congregation, little above our sexton, but was not responsible for the piety, faith, or morality of the Church, and was too humble an officer to be represented by a **star.**

5) More probable than any of these is the view of Alford, that real, and not symbolical, angels of the Churches are meant. There are the child's angel, Matt. xviii, 10; "it is his angel," Acts xii, 15; and the national angel-princes of Dan. x, 21. The strict responsibility to which these seven angels are held for the excellence of their Churches, each, accords with the established idea of a strong connexion between the guardian angel and his ward. But it may be doubted whether any patron or guardian angel is ever in Scripture more than either a symbol or a popular imagination, as in Acts xii, 15.

and [e] the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

e Zech. 4. 2; Matt. 5. 15; Phil. 2. 15.

6) As the candlestick is the symbol of the corporate human body of the Church, the analogy is strong for a human ruler or teacher of the Church. Thus in Mal. ii, 2, the priest is "the messenger (angel) of the Lord of Hosts." Mal. iii, 1: "Behold, I send my messenger," (angel;) the prediction of John the Baptist. Gal. iv, 14: "Ye ...received me as an angel of God." That there were president-presbyters or bishops in Asia at this time, ordained by John himself, is as certain as any thing in primitive Church history. About this time Polycarp was bishop in Smyrna, and Ignatius in Antioch. Bishops were appointed, from a need of the times, as a stronghold against heresies, and as authentic preservers of the apostolic doctrines and of the sacred New Testament canon. This was specially important before the canon was completely established. And this gave, at that period, a special importance to a true succession of the bishops as a reliable chain of apostolic tradition. A successional ordination authenticated the officer to those who acknowledged the ordaining authority. But such facts fall far short of making an unbroken succession through centuries the authenticating test of a true Church. The bishop was very much "the successor of the apostles," not by a continuation of the same line of office, but as *a substitute*, serving some of the same purposes. While episcopacy is thus sanctioned by apostolic authority as permissible, and perhaps always best, it is not made obligatory

CHAPTER II.

2. Epistles successively to the seven Churches, ii, 1-iii, 22.

The seven epistles to the Churches of Asia have been interpreted by a few commentators as a symbolical representation of the varying conditions of the Church through a chronological succession of periods. Thus Vitringa made them typify the

CHAPTER II.

UNTO the angel of the church

a Chapter

history of the Church from its first founding down to his own time. But the failure to make out a due correspondence between the supposed representation and its fulfilments has been so evident, that even Elliott rejects that mode of interpretation. Nevertheless, that these Churches are typical of the varying spiritual conditions of the Churches of the world is evident from the symbolic seven, and from the variety of pictures presented, in which every Church may find its own traits, with its proper warnings and promises. These epistles are a permanent book for the Church. That this was a very early opinion in the Church is clearly indicated by these remarkable words in the Muratorian fragment, a document of the second century: "For although John in the Apocalypse writes to the seven Churches, nevertheless he speaks to all." Hence Bengel, in his later days, earnestly commended these epistles to the solemn study of ministers and people; and Alford and Wordsworth notice, with profound regret, that the Anglican Church has placed no lessons from the Apocalypse in her ritual for the congregation.

The seven epistles are constructed on a striking and remarkably uniform type. Each one may be *divided into three parts.*

I. The divine SELF-ANNUNCIATION of the Speaker. 1. It is introduced in every epistle with the formula, **Unto... the Church of...write.** 2. It then begins with, **These things saith.** 3. He who **saith,** namely, Christ, is then specified by one or more of those glorious titles ascribed to him either in John's personal delineation of the Christophany, or Christ's annunciation of himself in the previous chapter.

II. A CHARACTERIZATION; namely, of the particular Church, solemnly reprehending its faults or graciously commending its excellences. 1. The characterization is introduced with, **I know thy works.** 2. A specification of traits, usually beginning with

of Ephesus write; These things saith [a]he that holdeth the seven

1. 16, 20.

those that are good, with commendation, and then qualifying with adverse points, with reproof. 3. Of the **seven,** Smyrna and Philadelphia are in the most commendable condition; Ephesus and Pergamos are characterized with mingled approval and reproof; Sardis and Laodicea with almost unmingled reproof and warning.

III. A RETRIBUTIVE CONCLUSION; namely, of promise or threatening. 1. The retributive part in the first three epistles is preceded by the warning clause, **He that hath an ear,** etc.; in the last four epistles it is succeeded and terminated by that warning clause. Similar, the clause concerning **him that overcometh,** is in the first three placed first; in the last three last. 2. The promise or threat is generally anticipatively borrowed from the closing three chapters of the Apocalypse; mostly, the promises are from the description of the new state of chap. xxii.

Each epistle presents the Speaker in most divine majesty, criticises the Church with profound discrimination, and pronounces sentence with most solemn authority.

I. EPHESUS.—*The Church of former faith and power, but present decline,* 1–7.

1. **Ephesus**—The messenger who bore this epistle to Ephesus would have a sea route through the blue Ægean, of sixty miles, a brief trip for a modern steamer. Of the great and noble city into whose harbor he arrives we have given some account in our notes on Paul's visiting the city and founding the Church, in Acts xix, 1. Paul came down upon the city from the interior high-lands; our messenger approaches it, reversely, from the sea. How Paul here found a few believers in John the Baptist, preached in the school of Tyrannus, encountered Diana of the Ephesians, and founded the Ephesian Church, we have duly noted in that chapter. How afterwards Paul, returning from his final missionary tour, called the elders of Ephesus to a last interview with himself at

stars in his right hand, [b] who walk- | eth in the midst of the seven gold-

b Chapter 1. 13.

Miletus, (see our map,) we have noted on Acts xx, 17–38. Paul's warning to the elders should be read before reading this epistle to this same Ephesus. Next we have the epistles of Paul to Timothy at Ephesus, and we see Timothy either briefly or permanently at that city. John arrived there probably soon after the commencement of the Roman war against the Jews, or after the fall of Jerusalem, and was banished to the rocky isle of Patmos by the Emperor Domitian. And now this epistle of Christ to Ephesus gives us the last glance at the Church and city furnished us in the New Testament. After that we must go to history for a knowledge of their destinies.

Historically, Ephesus had ever maintained an eminence among the cities of Ionia. In the earliest times, before their conquest by the Persians, Ephesus was head of the confederacy of twelve cities. Under the Romans, while the other cities tended to decline, its favourable commercial position, and the munificence of its Roman rulers, rendered it the emporium of Asia Minor. The Bishop of Ephesus, in later times, was a Metropolitan and a Patriarch. But when, in 1308, it submitted to the Turk, its inhabitants were transported to Tyræum and there massacred.

Write — Mohammed wrote, or at least claimed to have written, his own Koran; but Jesus Christ dictates to another to **write.** It is not recorded that he ever wrote, except mysteriously, upon the pavement. His majestic words, uttered as by the voice of **many waters,** and penned by his apostle, were, doubtless, received at that apostle's Ephesus as virtually written by Christ's own hand. To none but these seven Churches did Christ ever address a written epistle, yet in these seven Churches are we all represented. What he wrote to them he writes to us.

Was one copy of each single epistle carried to each single church, or was the whole Apocalypse carried to the whole in a single volume or roll? We think that the whole first three chapters are one Christophanic Apocalypse; but as each epistle was truly for all the seven, (and really for *us* all,) and as the title and introductory parts preface all the epistles as a unit, we may believe that the whole first three chapters were, either in separate copies or in one common circular for each in succession, sent round to the whole circuit of Churches in the order in which they are named. Each Church could then transcribe its own copy, with the common understanding that this body of epistles was the harbinger of a further and great Apocalypse, with which it was to be a unit, and which was soon to be received from their own great apostle, now in Patmos. When, after the death of the savage Domitian, John and the other banished Christians were returned to their homes by the Emperor Nerva, Domitian's successor, John resumed his apostolic circuit around the seven Churches, and may have reduced the Apocalypse to a unit, so that no separated copies survived. **These things** — The two clauses by which the divine Speaker describes himself here, are taken from St. John's description of his person, chap. i, 13, 16. They describe his authority over the Churches, and are beautifully appropriate to the metropolitan Church of Ephesus, the Church of St. John's own residence. **Holdeth** —Is here a different word from **had,** in i, 16, and a stronger, signifying *graspeth*, or *holdeth fast.* It asserts strongly this power and possession, as if each Church were a gem in his grasp and at his disposal. None can pluck them from his hand, (John x, 28,) and it is his to exalt them to heaven or cast them down to hell, according to their faithfulness or apostasy. When, therefore, these letters patent came from Christ at Patmos, with what earnestness did both **he** that **readeth** to the congregation **and they that hear** within the congregation, listen **to the words of this prophecy!** i, 3. **Walketh**—In St. John's

en candlesticks; **2** [c]I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and [d]thou hast tried them [e]which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: **3** And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast [f]not fainted. **4** Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because [g]thou hast left thy

[c] Psa. 1. 6; verses 9, 13, 19; chap. 3. 1, 8, 15.—[d] 1 John 4. 1.

[e] 2 Cor. 11. 13; 2 Pet. 2. 1.—[f] Gal. 6. 9; Heb. 12. 3, 5.—[g] Jer. 2. 25; Matt. 24. 12.

description, i, 13, he is apparently standing, but here he **walketh.** He **walketh in the midst of the...golden candlesticks,** to watch the strength or fulness of their blaze, to supply the oil of grace, to trim their dead wicks, and to remove them when their lustre, in spite of his every care, persistently dies away. These **seven** Lydian **Churches,** lying on the soil of Asia as their names lie on our little map, know that the glorious Lord is *walking* around their circuit—that he is even present while they listen to his golden letters.

2. **I know**—**His** omniscient **eyes ...as a flame of fire,** (i, 14,) blaze into the deepest recesses of their hearts and into all the deeds of their daily life. **Thy**—As the epistles are addressed each to the **angel,** it is remarkable how uniformly throughout the second person singular **thy, thou,** and **thee** are used. It might at first seem as if the missives from Patmos passed over the heads of the congregation and hit **the angel** only. Yet we think that no such misconception took place. The letters were to **the Churches,** (i, 4, 11,) and each Church in its unity knew that the angel and the Church were so one that his fault was their fault, his excellence theirs. And it was no divergency to address plurally **you** and **the rest,** as in ver. 24. If the bishops were here addressed, it is certain that bishops were first appointed as the bulwarks of the faith, to preserve the pure, unmingled apostolic tradition, to guard the books of the growing canon of the New Testament, and to repel the entrance of errors and demoralizations. Hence to the bishop belonged a high responsibility. He was praised or blamed as his Church was faultless or faulty. With a similar **charge** in the second person singular does St. Paul address Timothy. He must see that the true gospel tradition be preserved against all heresies. (1 Tim. v, 1–20, where see our notes.) He is responsible for the trial and suitableness of the elders, and for their careful ordination, v, 17–22. And we may add, that in the narrative given by St. Clement of St. John and the young man of Ephesus, the apostle holds the bishop to the same sharp responsibility, in the second person singular, as he exhibits here.

Thy works—Both good and bad, both external and internal, of the hand and of the heart. But it is of the good he first speaks, namely, **labour** or activity, and **patience** or firm persistence passively. **Canst not bear**—Carry as a burden. They had both a holy **patience** and a holy impatience. **Tried them...apostles**—Who claimed to be commissioned by Christ to dictate doctrines to the Church, and so to be **apostles.** The Ephesians had ample means for trying by the then extant gospels of the four evangelists, by St. Paul's warnings in Acts xx, and in his epistle to their own Church and to other Churches. **Liars**—One of St. John's severe terms, arising from his deep conception of the evil of falsifying Christianity at its fountain, and so sending down a false religion to the future ages.

3. **Hast borne** with even those whom thou **canst not bear.** A contradiction in terms, a truth in facts.

4. **Nevertheless**—The turning point from commendation to reproof. **Somewhat**—Not in the Greek, which would read, **I have against thee** that **thou hast left,** etc. **First love**—The glow of holy life at their first conversion, (Acts xix,) and so beautifully recognised in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Hengstenberg remarks, "That first

first love **5** Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; [h] or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick

[h] Matt. 21. 41, 43; Mark 12. 9; Luke 12. 45, 46. —[i] Verse 15.

love we see still flourishing so long as Paul's connexion with the Ephesians lasts."

5. **Remember**—A calling to remembrance the days when his heart was rich with his **first** divine **love,** is often the first inspiring impulse for the backslider to return. **First works**—For that early **love** was not a mere emotion end ng where it begun, within the feeling, but put itself forth in **works. I will come**—Greek present tense, *I come*, or, *am coming;* but **remove** is in the future, showing that the present of **come** implies vividness of conception. The **come** does not designate the second advent, for which *parousia* is the unequivocal word, as noted in 2 Pet. iii, 4. This *coming* is the interposition of Christ to **remove** the Church of Ephesus. This removal some interpreters apply to the transfer of the primary episcopate elsewhere. Others, to the transfer of the Christian Church from east to west, from Asia to Europe. We can easily imagine how the necessity of uttering this threat to his own Ephesus should touch the heart of St. John.

6. **But**—An added mitigation of the rebuke, and a directing how to avoid the *removal.* **Hatest the deeds**—The Ephesians hated better than they loved. Severe pietists hate sinners often more than they love goodness. They abhor antichrist more than they love Christ. And these are in danger of mixing an impure passion with their moral antagonism, which may produce a fall from Christian **love.** After having warned his Ephesians of this danger, our seer reiterates the rightness of their abhorrence of the corruptionists, assuring them of Christ's authentication therein. **Nicolaitans**—The professed followers of Nicolas, one of the first seven deacons of Jerusalem, as we have noted on Acts vi, 5. The

out of his place, except thou repent. **6** But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of [i] the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. **7** [k] He that hath an ear, let him hear

[k] Matt. 11. 15; 13. 9, 43; verses 11, 17, 29; chapter 3. 6, 13, 22; 13. 9.

earliest authorities are decisive on this point. Says Irenæus: "The Nicolaitans also have Nicolaus as their master, one of the first seven who were ordained to the deaconship by the apostles." Tertullian: "Another heretic emerged—Nicolaus. He was one of the seven deacons mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles." Later, and so less trustworthy, authorities exculpate Nicolas, under excuse either that he was misunderstood by his followers or that they claimed his authority falsely, or that it was another Nicolas, a bishop of Samaria, who was their real founder. As we have said in our note above quoted, the sexual licentiousness of the sect was based upon a philosophical maxim, namely, that all evil resides in matter. From this principle two opposite inferences could be drawn, and two opposing sects be formed. 1. It could be affirmed that all material indulgence must be avoided, and thence would arise asceticism, with its rejection of meats, monasticism, enforced celibacy, self-flagellation, and denial of the real corporeity of Christ. 2. It could, on the other hand, be affirmed that all material sins could be indulged, and yet the spirit be pure, and thence would arise the most unrestrained inebriety and debauchery. It was this last sect which our Lord gives over to a holy and divine **hate.** See our note on Acts vi, 5; viii, 9–12; Rom. xiv, 1–6; 2 Thess. ii, 7. Well might the true heart **hate the deeds** of this sect, for it would have buried Christianity in base licentiousness. But while the Christian would **hate** their **deeds,** he would earnestly wish to save the men.

7. **Hath an ear**—This summons to every human ear to listen, preludes the glorious promise to the conqueror in the battle of faith through which Ephesus is struggling. Let every **ear hear,**

what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give [l] to eat of [m] the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

8 And unto the angel of the

[l] Chapter 22. 2, 14.

[m] Genesis 2. 9.

for there can be no more thrilling announcement than this. It is seven times uttered; each utterance connected with the closing promise; the first thrice preceding the final promise, the other four times succeeding it, until in the last it gives a ringing close to the seven epistles. **The Spirit saith**—For the utterance of the Son is with the concurrent inspiration of the **Spirit. Unto the Churches**—For what he **saith** to one he saith for all; and what he **saith** for **the Churches** he saith for every individual **ear** in **the Churches. To him that overcometh**—The seven promises are each made to the conqueror in the struggle, suggested by the characterization preceding. The Christian life is a battle, and the crown awaits the victor. Wordsworth attempts, with little success, to show that the seven promises succeed each other in ascending degrees. They are: 1. To eat of the tree of life in paradise. 2. Exemption from second death. 3. The secret white stone with the secret name. 4. Rule with Christ over the nations. 5. The white raiment, the name unblotted from the book of life, and confessed before God and angels. 6. To be a pillar in the temple of my God. 7. To be co-assessor on the throne. **Will I give** the privilege **to eat of...tree...paradise**—This refers to xxii, 2, which is not (as Wordsworth) in the spirit world, but in the paradise merged in the eternal heaven, and, therefore, is the highest final award. See notes on 1 Thess. iv, 17.

II. Smyrna.—*The poor in wealth, but rich in faith and works*, 8–11.

8. **Smyrna**—From Ephesus, proceeding northward in a straight line, a journey of forty miles would bring our messenger, or rather, we may say, our apostle, on his circuit to Smyrna. He might have gone by sea; but the modern traveller every now and then falls upon traces of the old Roman road from Ephesus to Smyrna. Smyrna was first founded, or at least planned, by Alexander the Great, in consequence of a dream soon after the battle of Granicus. During the vicissitudes of conquest by Persian, Grecian, and Roman, Smyrna was renowned for the easy servility with which she flattered every new master. Her most admirable harbour, in modern times has secured her pre-eminent prosperity. She is the ordinary point from which the European traveller starts for the interior. Being thus the seaport of Asia Minor, Smyrna is the most modernized of all the seven. "Along the seashore," says Svoboda, "is a row of houses among which are seen some flagstaffs of all the foreign consuls, and projecting on the water are a number of *cafés*. The civilized Turks, Greeks, and Armenians have adopted European manners and dress. The European quarter, which extends all along the seashore to the Point, is the most handsome in appearance, with the finest houses, and is beautifully situated. The Turkish and Jewish quarters, which are the poorest, lie on the slope of Mount Pagus." Two lines of railway have been constructed during the last few years; the one running to Ephesus and Aidin, (Tralles,) and the other to Magnesia and Cassaba, a distance of sixty miles. The climate and scenery are among the finest in the world, and the soil productive, but badly cultivated. Herodotus was not mistaken when he wrote in his book, (1. s. 142,) "These Ionians, to whom the Panionium belongs, have built their cities under the finest climate in the world with which we are acquainted." The principal merchants, after our own fashion, reside in suburban villages connected with town by railways. Of the founding of Christianity in that place the New Testament gives us no account, and its growth at the writing of this epistle is an indication of the late date of the Apocalypse. Smyrna is celebrated in early Christian history as the place of the episcopate and mar-

church in Smyrna write; These things saith [n]the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 9 [o]I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art [p]rich; and *I know* the blasphemy of [q]them which say they are Jews, and are not, [r]but *are* the

n Chapter 1. 8, 17, 18.—*o* Verse 2.—*p* Luke 12. 21; 1 Tim. 6. 18; James 2. 5.

q Romans 2. 17, 28, 29; 9. 6; Galatians 3. 7, 29. —*r* Chapter 3. 9.

tyrdom of Polycarp, the pupil of St. John, the teacher of Irenæus, who, according to both Irenæus and Tertullian, was ordained by St. John to the episcopate. He may have been the very **angel** here addressed by St. John. He was martyred in A.D. 168, and at his death declared that he had served a faithful Lord for eighty-six years, bringing the year of his conversion at A. D. 82. But this epistle was probably written thirteen years after that conversion, namely, in A. D. 95. Polycarp might have been bishop within thirteen years after his conversion, and so may have been **the angel** of this epistle. We seem to see in the high spiritual tone and martyr air of the epistle some indication of Saint Polycarp. The tomb of Polycarp, overshadowed by a cypress tree, is still shown. **Dead...is alive**—Repeated from the Christophanic self-annunciation of chap. i, 11–20. It strikingly corresponds with the entire address to this martyr Church. It told the suffering Christian that he was a follower of a martyred Lord, and that holy martyrdom was a gate to a glorious resurrection. The phrase **and is alive** must not be lowered into **and is alive** *again.* It is not that (as Trench supposes) *vixit* is equivalent to *re-vixit.* See our note on xx, 5. The meaning is, that such death is no interruption to the true life. The death of the body is only phenomenal; it leaves in continuity that blessed, immortal, true life that comes from Christ.

MONUMENT TO POLYCARP.

9. **But thou art rich**—The parenthetic words, flung in as if to correct his own language. Their poverty, like their death, was only phenomenal Their death was truly an immortal life, and their poverty an infinite treasure. Doubtless their poverty and their death came from the same cause —the oppression of their persecutors. Among all the commendations to the seven, perhaps this, **but thou art rich,** is the brightest stroke. It was the consolation for their deepest sorrow, and it was of all joys their highest joy. Note that here it was **tribulation and poverty** on one side, and **blasphemy** on the other; **blasphemy** alike against the Lord and against his followers. **Say they are Jews**—And, doubtless, were **Jews** by descent from Abraham, but not in character. They are unnatural sons of their natural father, since they rejected the Messiah whom Abraham foresaw and predicted. One of the most interesting remains of early Christian literature is a letter written by this Church of Smyrna to the Church at Philomelum as a circular to be sent the round of sister Churches. It relates that after Polycarp was apprehended and condemned to death by fire: "This, then, was done with greater speed than it was spoken, the whole multitude instantly gathering together wood and fagots out of the workshops and booths; the Jews especially, *according to their custom,* assisting them in doing it." After his death the governor was dissuaded from giving his remains to his friends under pretence that he refused lest, forsaking Him who was crucified, they should begin to worship Polycarp. "This he did *at the suggestion of the Jews,* who also watched us that we should not take him out of the fire, not considering that it is impossible for us either to forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all such as shall be saved throughout the world, or to worship any other." **The synagogue**

VIEW OF SMYRNA, FROM THE HARBOUR.

The large buildings on the reader's right are barracks for the soldiery. The castle is seen on the heights above the city. The consular residences, with their flags, on the left.

synagogue of Satan. **10** [s]Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: [t]be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee [u]a crown of life. **11** [v]He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of [w]the second death.

[s] Matt. 10. 22.—[t] Matt. 24. 13.—[u] James 1. 12; chap. 3. 11.

[v] Verse 7; chapter 13. 9.—[w] Chapter 20. 14; 21. 8.

of Satan—How truly they deserved this severe title the previous narrative shows. So hostile were the Jews to the Christians of this first age, that the term *synagogue* is seldom applied to a Christian Church, the general Church preferring the classic term *ecclesia*. Trench finely remarks, "As we have here '*the synagogue of Satan*,' so, presently, '*the throne of Satan*,' (ii, 13,) and then, lastly, '*the depths of Satan*,' (ii, 24;) the *synagogue of Satan*, representing the Jewish antagonism to the Church; *the throne of Satan*, the heathen; and *the depths of Satan*, the heretical."

10. **Fear none**—Literally, (Greek,) *Fear not what things thou art about to suffer.* And this *fear not* cheers them with three facts:—their persecution will be limited to a few, **some**: to a brief time, **ten days**: and will be followed by **a crown of life.** The word **some** is, indeed, not expressed by the Greek, but is necessarily implied: the Church would not be exterminated: it is not exterminated yet. **Ten days**—Literally, *thou shalt have a persecution of ten days.* A variety of unnecessary symbolical interpretations have been given to the **ten days.** They have been interpreted to predict "the ten persecutions," which history has been rather strained to make out in order to fulfil that meaning of the text. But if ten general persecutions could be made out, still this text only predicts locally, and for Smyrna alone. Others find a parallelism with the ten commandments; and others, applying the "year-day" principle, find ten years. But the purpose of the whole verse is to express a consoling limitation of the time, as **some of you** limits the number. **Ten days,** as a brief round number, occurs in Gen. xxiv, 55; Num. xi, 19; Dan. i, 12. **Unto death**—Even a martyr's **death.** The words do not mean *during thy life*, but to the extremest suffering, even of **death. Crown of life**—The glorious antithesis of **death.** Says Trench: "This '*crown of life*,' always remaining essentially the same, is not the less designated by a rich variety of images. Here, and with St. James, (i, 12,) it is a '*crown of life;*' with St. Paul, a 'crown *of righteousness*,' (2 Tim. iv, 8;) with St. Peter, a 'crown *of glory*,' (1 Pet. v, 4;) with Isaiah, a 'crown *of beauty;*' with which compare diadem *of beauty*, (Wisdom v, 7;) in the martyrdom of Polycarp, a 'crown *of incorruption;*' with Ignatius, a 'crown *of conflict.*'" **A crown of life,** is **life** or immortality itself, as a bestowed and crowning endowment.

11. **Not be hurt of. . . second death**—However he may suffer the **death** of martyrdom, his crown of life exalted him far above **the second death.** The promise corresponds, also, with the self announcement in verse 8. The second death, in xx, 15, is defined as the being cast into the "lake of fire." Neither term—**second death** nor **lake of fire**—is used in any scripture outside the Apocalypse. Gehenna, a figure drawn from the valley of Hinnom at Jerusalem, used by our Lord, and used in the New Testament twelve times, comes most nearly to the same conception. Both Gehenna and second death are terms introduced into Jewish biblicism by the Targumists, the Hebrew paraphrastic translators of the Old Testament.

How the term **second death** was understood at Smyrna may be inferred from certain passages from the above quoted letter from the Smyrnean Church. Thus, when the proconsul threatened Polycarp with death by fire, the latter replied, "Thou threatenest me with the fire that burns for an

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith [x] he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; **13** [y] I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* [z] where Satan's seat *is:* and [a] thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. **14** But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of [b] Balaam,

[x] Chap. 1. 16.—[y] Verse 2.—[z] Verse 9.—[a] 1 Thess. 5. 21; 2 Tim. 1. 13; Heb. 3. 6; 10. 23.

[b] Numbers 24. 14; 25. 1; 31. 16; 2 Peter 2. 15 Jude 11.

hour and in a little time is extinguished; for thou knowest not the fire of the future judgment, and of the eternal punishment that is reserved for the ungodly." Of the other martyrs the Church says, "Even the fire of their persecutors seemed cold unto them, for they had before their eyes the prospect of escaping that which is eternal and unquenchable."

III. PERGAMOS.—*The martyr Church, yet too tolerant of licentious heresy,* 12–17.

12. **Pergamos**—Sixty miles northeast from Smyrna, would bring our apostle on his circuit to Pergamos, (more correct form of the word, *Pergamum,*) once the celebrated capital of a small kingdom ruled by a succession of noble monarchs. It was the seat of the temple of Esculapius, and once the possessor of a library of 200,000 volumes, collected by one of its kings, but afterwards added to the Alexandrian library in Egypt. But whatever its ancient intellectual or moral fame, it seems to have been in the time of the Apocalypse the headquarters of antichristianity, where the only martyr by John commemorated suffered death. In the other epistles the *Churches* are rebuked, in this the *city* is anathematized.

13. **And where thou dwellest**—A touch of sympathy and palliation for shortcomings. **Satan's seat is**—No contemporary history exists to tell us what rendered Pergamos the home of the Satanic *throne;* for *throne* the word **seat** should have been rendered. Wordsworth notes, that the emblem of Esculapius was the serpent, who is represented on the Pergamene medals as "Pergameus Deus," *the* Pergamene god; and this temple may have been the **seat of Satan.** Great numbers resorted to the Esculapian shrine for cures; and the cures were supposed to be effected by the miraculous power of the god. Hence it appears quite a probability that this temple, like that of Diana at Ephesus, was the source of violent persecution to the Church, rendering the city the stronghold of a violent pagan fanaticism.

The terms **holdest fast, hast not denied,** are delightful endorsements of the patience of the Church in that trying hour. **Even**—What heightens the firmness. **Antipas**—Is said by Eusebius to have been slain, in a tumult, by the Esculapian priests. He is supposed to have been bishop of Pergamos, and to have been martyred in the time of Domitian. The Greek Church dedicates April 11 as his day. Hengstenberg, by a preposterous etymology, makes Antipas mean "against all," giving the last syllable its Greek meaning of *all.* This meaning of the whole name he likens to *antichrist,* against Christ, and *anticosmos,* against the world. To this Alford objects, that Antipas is a contraction of Antipater, and so cannot bear such a meaning. (See our biography of Luke, prefixed to his Gospel.) Trench, however, as absurd as Hengstenberg, while not accepting his meaning of Antipas, condemns Alford's objection, averring that Antipas has all the rights of a word however formed. But surely if Antipas is merely a shortened form of Antipater, (meaning, *instead of a father, pro-father,*) the last syllable cannot mean *all.* When it is maintained by some that Antipas is an allegorical and not a real character, because **Balaam** and **Jezebel** are here used allegorically, we reply that neither designates an unreal person in this book.

14. **Doctrine of Balaam** — The teachings of Balaam and of the Nicolai-

who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, [c] to eat things sacrificed unto idols, [d] and to commit fornication.

[c] Verse 20; Acts 15. 29; 1 Cor. 8. 9, 10; 10. 19, 20.

tans, had each a very different historical origin and doctrinal basis. The former is Shemitic, the latter is Aryan; the former came from Phœnicia, the latter from India. Baal-Peor, the god of Balaam and the Moabites, was no other than the Phœnician god Baal, with Peor added to designate the local name of his Moabite worship. Baal was held by the glowing sensuality of the Phœnicians to be the sun-god, the fire-god; thence the god of all sexual generation in nature, vegetable, animal, human. The taurus, bull, was his animal representative, the type of vigorous generative power. His image for worship was the phallus. In the religious theory the sexual impulse was a holy sensation, the temple was a consecrated brothel, the priestess was a harlot, and the rites were debauchery; not only made decent and respectable, but sacred and religious by this most satanic of systems. As counterpart this same Baal, as fire-god, was Moloch, the representative of the destructive power of the element of heat. Human victims were made sacrifices to this form of the god, by "passing through the fire," fully proving the serious earnestness of the belief of the people in both forms of deity and both systems of rites. Ashtaroth (Greek form, Astarte) was the feminine side of the same worship, to which the lustful Venus was in later ages the Roman parallel. It was the most seductive of religions, and haunted Israel through his whole history, requiring all the energy of prophets and priests, and of pious kings, to repel its inroads and preserve the nation true to its holy mission. The failure was at last complete, and brought on the captivity. Pictures of the ruin wrought by Israel's adoption of this double system of sensuality and cruelty—of Baal and Moloch—abound in the sacred history, but as specimen passages, 2 Kings xvii, 6-33, and Hosea iv, 12-14, may be read. In the Apocalyptic age, some of the more sensual traits of this system passed to the Roman mythology, (see our vol. iv, p. 9,) and its ideas would often be adopted by mystical sensualists who loved to veil base indulgences with religious sanctions. In our own day sexual promiscuity is sometimes blended with religious pretences, but more usually under the authority of physiology and race developments. The existence of the doctrine of Balaam at Pergamos seemed to be rather in intimate proximity with the Church than within it. The Church was responsible, not so much for sharing in it, as for too little energy of opposition to it. **Stumblingblock**—Note on Matt. xviii, 7. **Idols...fornication**—It was this union of sacrificial feasting with regularly established and expected debaucheries, which we at this day can hardly understand, that rendered it dangerous for the Christian to attend a feast or to eat of sacrificial meat. It was by this route that sexuality would have a short cut into a primitive Church. So it was in Corinth. 1 Cor. v, 1.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctine [e] of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. **16** Repent; or else I will come unto thee

[d] 1 Corinthians 6. 13, &c.—[e] Verse 6.

15. So hast thou also—Observe that the Nicolaitans are different from, and additional to, the holders of the teachings of **Balaam**, and not identical. They very much agreed in the ultimate of licentiousness they reached, but from different historical and doctrinal starting points. The doctrines of **Balaam** were a remnant of the old Canaanite or Phœnician Baalism, and were Shemitic; that of the Nicolaitans was Aryan, derived from India, and based on the dogma of the residence of all evil in matter. See notes on Acts vi, 5, Jude 11, and Introduction to John's Epistles. The active existence of these heretics at the time of the writing of this book proves it later than the reign of Nero.

16. Thee...them—His visitation would be to the Church and its bishops,

quickly, and [f] will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.
17 [g] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone [h] a new

[f] Isa. 11. 4; 2 Thess. 2. 8; chap. 1. 16; 19. 15, 21.

[g] Verses 7, 11.—[h] Chapter 3. 12; 19. 12.

his **fight** would be with the sensualists. **Sword of my mouth**—The blessed weapon of moral warfare and providential destruction. Observe the threatening corresponds with the *sword* of the self-assertion in verse 12.

17. **Hidden manna**—For him who spurns the meat of idol sacrifices there is reserved a divine food, the **hidden manna.** Not merely *secret*, but **hidden,** laid up and deposited away from human gaze. So God commanded Moses, Exod. xvi, 32–34, to deposit a memorial **manna,** "and lay it up before the Lord to be kept for your generations." According to Heb. ix, 4, the **manna** was deposited in a pot enclosed in the ark of the covenant, within the holy of holies. Our Saviour denominates himself the "bread," figured by the manna, (John vi, 48–50,) of which our sacramental bread is the symbol. But the depositing the memorial manna by Moses in the holy of holies, (the symbol of the highest heavens,) figures Christ in his ascended and resurrected state. Heb. ix, 24. It is our risen Lord, then, who is our **hidden manna,** our immortalizing food. Parallel to this is the fruit of the tree of life, the aliment of a heavenly immortality, whose vitality and vitalizing power are derived from Christ. See note on Revelation xxii. **A white stone**—Of all interpretations of this image, that of Trench is both most beautiful and most satisfactory. The white stone is the oracular urim, (it was probably a diamond,) in the breast-plate of the High-priest, bearing the incommunicable name. And as every glorified Christian becomes a high-priest, so to every one is given the diamond urim. This **stone,** as **white,** represents the purity of heaven. Nay more, it is not merely the pale dim **white,** (Latin, *albus,*) but the lustrous, radiating white, (Latin, *candidus,*) of which the diamond gives a sample, and so symbolizes even the glory of heaven. So, **white** are the hairs of the Son of God, i, 14; and *white* raiment, iii, 5; *white* robes, vii, 9: a *white* cloud xiv, 14; *white* horses xix, 8, 14; great *white* throne, xx, 1.

The Greek word for **stone** here, ψηφος, meaning a pebble or smooth seaworn stone, was used before the invention of the paper ballot for the decision of alternative questions, as the election of a candidate to office, or the acquittal of an accused person; which was by a "white stone" in opposition to a black. Hence it was used in some kinds of divination to decide a future event, which may have suggested its use here for the urim, by which the will of Jehovah was ascertained; though Trench does not notice that point. The use of the word to designate so precious a stone as the diamond, is, perhaps, sustained by the fact, that in later Greek it is used by Callimachus to denote the gem of a finger-ring.

How far it is made sure that the urim was a diamond is not so clear. The breastplate of the high priest (see note, Matt. xxvi, 3) was studded with twelve precious stones, on which were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes. The urim was, very probably, an additional stone, most precious of all, and so a diamond, or at least some stone of high value and radiant clearness. Its highest value, however, was, that it was officially borne upon the heart of the high priest in his highest functions, and that it was a medium of communion with Jehovah. The **white stone** bestowed upon the apocalyptic conqueror, that is, upon every triumphant Christian, is token that *he* is high priest, and his intercommunion with God is glorious. And all this is confirmed by the remarkable fact that both **the hidden manna** and **the white stone** of the urim being in the holy of holies, were accessible to the high priest alone.

If we reject this identification of the

name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*.

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, [i] who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass; **19** [k] I know thy works, and [l] charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and

i Chap. 1. 14, 15.—*k* Verse 2.

l Col. 3. 14; 1 Thess. 3. 6.

white stone as too ingenious, or for other reasons, we may fall back upon Hengstenberg's view, that **the white stone** is merely the appropriate basis or surface for bearing the gracious inscription of the divine witness of our sonship of God. And we may also add the view of Grotius and others, that the white stone is an entrance-ticket into the gates of heaven, with God's own signature upon it. **He that receiveth it—It** means the **stone**, and not the **name**; the **name** is not that of the receiver, but that of the divine donor. And nothing can be wiser than Bengel's reply to him that asks, What is that **name**? "Wouldst thou know what sort of a **name** thou wouldst receive? Overcome! Otherwise, thou askest vainly. But overcoming thou wilt soon read that name upon the white stone." That **name** is not a word, but a power.

IV. THYATIRA—*The working Church, yet too careless of Christian truth and purity*, 18–28.

18. **Thyatira**—From the renowned capital, Pergamos, to the still more renowned Sardis, our apostle would find a strait south-eastern Roman road: he would be obliged to turn a little aside to the east to the lesser town of **Thyatira.** When Alexander the Great drove the Persian power out of Ionia, he and his successors planted therein a number of cities, filling them with inhabitants from his own Macedonia. Of these cities one was Thyatira. This city was filled with a number of industrial classes or guilds, namely: bakers, potters, weavers, tanners, dyers, etc. Hence "Lydia of Thyatira" was found at Philippi, Macedonia, by Paul, and she became the first European Christian convert. She was "a seller of purple," probably the cloth, the "imperial purple," not the dye alone. She was, doubtless, a Macedonian by descent, a Lydian by birth, a Philippian by residence. She bore the name of her native province, for Lydia was no doubt her proper name. Altogether Luke's narrative places her as a graceful figure in early Christian history. How vivid the contrast between Lydia of Thyatira and Jezebel of Thyatira! It is curious to note that the American missionary, Brewer, in 1831, found the guild of dyers still working at the occupation in Thyatira. It was never a great city, but a thrifty manufacturing town. The modern town is said by Svoboda (*The Seven Churches of Asia*, 1869) to contain 15,000 inhabitants, of whom two thirds are Turks, one third Greek Christians, with a few Armenians. He adds, "The whole trade is in the hands of the Christian population, as it generally is throughout the East, the Christians comprising the most industrious and intelligent part of the population." **Son of God**—St. John had identified him as **son of man** in remembrance of the human humiliation in which he once had known him; he here identifies himself as that same **son** in his glorification. The promises at close of this epistle are taken from the second psalm, in which that sonship is described in its power. **Eyes... feet**—Quoted from St. John's picture of him, i, 14, 15. The **eyes** are alluded to in **searcheth,** verse 23.

19. **Thy works**—Works are here generic, and include the four qualities that follow, namely, **charity, service, faith, patience.** They are both **works** internal and **works** external. **Charity** is here *love* both to God and man. **Faith**—By the true reading this occurs next after **charity.** It implies the true believing faith by which a man is justified, a perseverance in which is *fidelity*. **Service**—The quality by which the faithful Christian *serves* the well-being of his fellow beings. **Patience**—The persistence and consistency with which he perseveres

the last *to be* more than the first. **20** Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman [m]Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants [n]to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

[m] 1 K. 16. 31; 21. 25; 2 Kin. 9. 7.——[n] Exod. 34. 15; Acts 15. 20, 29; 1 Cor. 10. 19, 20; ver. 14.

in those **works. And**—The semicolon should precede this **and,** and the clause should read, "and thy last works are more than the first." The blessed reverse of the declension of Ephesus, verse 4. The Church was abounding and advancing in graces of heart and activity of life.

20. **That woman**—Though Alford rather approves the reading, *thy wife*, (meaning the wife of the pastor or bishop,) Tischendorf and Trench reject it. This reading may have arisen from the words, "Jezebel, his wife," 1 Kings xxi, 25. **Jezebel**—Was the true female counterpart of Balaam, both being great patrons of the same system of idolatrous sensualism, the fiery Molochism of the Tyrian sun-god. He seduced Israel on his first entrance to the promised land; she, more fatally, centuries after, won the kingdom of Israel to a still more fatal form of the same apostasy. She was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre and priest of Astarte. She became the wife of Ahab, king of Israel, and not only imported the voluptuous rites of the Tyrian religion, but gave it a complete ascendency over the religion of Jehovah in Jehovah's own land. A contempt for the gloomy and narrow scruples of the true Israelite was diffused; it became aristocratic to be dissolute; temples were abundantly erected for the seductive rites, until but 7,000 adherents of Jehovah were alone known to Jehovah himself in the fallen nation. The overthrow and tragic end of **Jezebel** we need not here rehearse. Her antitype in spirit and influence was now found in the little Church of Thyatira, a libertine woman of great talent seducing the people by sensual doctrines, and leading them into most atrocious practices.

21 And I gave her space [o]to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. **22** Behold, I will cast her into a bed, [p]and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, [q]except they repent of their deeds. **23** And I will kill her children with death;

[o] Rom. 2. 4; chap. 9. 20.——[p] Ezek. 16. 37, 41; 23. 29.——[q] Jer. 36. 3; Ezek. 18. 30. 32.

There is not the slightest demand or excuse for giving any allegorical sense to these plain facts. The remark of Alford, that the emblematical name of **Jezebel,** given to this woman, leads "us into the regions of symbolism," is overstrained. If we were to brand a modern traitor with the name of Judas, that would not at all imply that his treasonable character and acts were allegorical, or his person an unreality. And we have specimens of even female lecturers at the present day denouncing the institution of marriage, and propagating a theory of unsanctified sensualism, aiding us to understand both the Tyrian and the Thyatirian **Jezebel.** She claimed to be **a prophetess,** as Balaam was a prophet. That is, she assumed to be a religious doctrinary. **My servants**—As Balaam's influence seduced Israel of old. **Fornication**—Eating of **things sacrificed unto idols.**

21. **I gave her space**—The Church tolerated her from negligence, but Christ allowed her **space** in mercy. Yet she had been living on probation. **Repented not**—It would seem that the **space** for repentance hardly now existed; yet there is a saving clause at the close of the next verse.

22. **Behold**—A challenge of attention to this threatened judgment; a judgment so clear and palpable as to strike **all the Churches,** verse 23 **Cast her into a bed**—Her bed of adulteries shall be exchanged for a bed of tribulation; a figurative **bed** of penalty for the literal **bed** of sin.

23. **Her children**—Not her partisans and followers, for they are threatened their due in the last verse; but her literal brood, who are worthy of **death** for the sins both which they

and all the churches shall know that [r] I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and [s] I will give unto every one of you according to your works. **24** But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; [t] I will put upon you none other

[r] 1 Sam. 16. 7; 1 Chron. 28. 9; 29. 17; 2 Chron. 6. 30; Psa. 7. 9; Jer. 11. 20; 17. 10; 20. 12; John 2. 24 25; Acts 1. 24; Rom. 8. 27.

[s] Psalm 62. 12; Matthew 16. 27; Romans 2. 6; 14. 12; 2 Corinthians 5. 10; Galatians 6. 5; chapter 20. 12.—[t] Acts 15. 28.

have learned from her and have freely practised. **With death**—As a direct penal infliction, a capital punishment. It shall not be a natural decease. **All the Churches**—The seven and their sister Churches: for Alford's opinion, that it means "all the Churches in the world," and gives "an œcumenical character to these messages," seems to be inadmissible. "The Churches" were to **know this** by the plainly palpable judicial character of the known penalties endured by these culprits; but those facts, as they were, have never been presented to "all the Churches in the world." We have, indeed, no proof that any special **tribulation** was suffered by these individuals. They may have **repented** under influence of this message. **Reins**—Literally, *the kidneys;* the lower parts of the back, where the workings of anxious emotions are recognised. **Reins and hearts** are often associated in Scripture, Psa. vii, 9; xxvi, 2; Jer. xi, 20. The searching them is named as an attribute of omniscience. And here the declaration is, that he whose **eyes** are **like unto a flame of fire,** fully knows all the dark secrets of these votaries of hidden sensual sin. **Works**—The doubt whether **Jezebel** was guilty of actual **deeds** of sin, expressed by Stuart and others, seems fully contradicted by such terms as **seduce, her fornication, commit adultery, deeds, works.** To resolve all these plain terms of active perpetration into figures signifying "doctrines," would render it difficult to find *any* terms which might not be figured out of their literal meaning. If these words do not express actual **deeds,** what terms can?

24. **Unto you... the rest** — The **and** being omitted as spurious, **you,** and **the rest,** mean the same class, namely, the part of the Church pure from **Jezebel. Depths... speak**—To boast of their *depth* was a trait of the Gnostics. Says Tertullian, "Put an inquiry to them in good faith, and with grave face and lofty brow they will answer, *It is deep!*" Says Irenæus, "Really blind, they profess themselves to have attained the depths of the abyss." And Eusebius says of the Simonians: "Those deeper secrets, of which they say that he who hears them for the first time would be astonished and confounded, are indeed full of folly and madness. They are such things that a decent person cannot write of them, nor open his lips about them, on account of their horrid filthiness and obscenity." **As they speak**—Or rather, *say,* or, *as they call them.* To whom does this **they** refer? Some reply, the Christians; but there is nothing that fixes the reference to them; and more probably it was the Gnostics who talked about **the depths.** It may be that the **they** *say,* has for its object the term **the depths,** while the phrase **of Satan** is flung in sarcastically by the Lord himself, to characterize their **depths.** It might then be printed thus: *have not known "the depths"* —of Satan!—*as they say.* Or the whole phrase, more probably, may be in the mouth of the Gnostics themselves, unequivocally professing that they do know the very **depths of Satan.** Their satanic bravado of licentiousness justifies this rendering. Eusebius says, (b. 4, c. 7,) that they went so far as to say, "that the basest deeds should be perpetrated by those who would attain to a perfect insight into their secret doctrine." See our note on 2 Thess. ii, 7. **None other burden**—Seems to be a remarkable quotation from the apostolic decree, Acts xv, 28, where the abstaining

burden. **25** But [u]that which ye have *already*, hold fast till I come. **26** And he that overcometh, and keepeth [v]my works unto the end, [w]to him will I give power over the nations: **27** [x]And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. **28** And I will give him [y]the morning star. **29** [z]He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

[u] Chap. 3. 11.—[v] John 6. 29; 1 John 3. 23.—[w] Matt. 19. 28; Luke 22. 29, 30; 1 Cor. 6. 3; chap. 3. 21; 20. 4.—[x] Psa. 2. 8, 9; 49. 14; Dan. 7. 22; ch. 12. 5; 19. 15.—[y] 2 Pet. 1. 19; ch. 22. 16.—[z] Ver. 7.

from licentious sacrificial feasts are the very **burden,** or Christian obligation, imposed upon them. Purity from these Gnostic **depths** is the only injunction he now presses upon them.

25. **But**—Closely following upon the last words. That *purity* is theirs now, only **hold it fast. Till I come**—**Till** the hour when your final account with me shall be settled.

We have elsewhere remarked, (1 Cor. xv, 23,) that while the Greek word *parousia* always designated, unequivocally and solely, Christ's second advent, yet the words *come* and *coming* often refer to other interpositions and spiritual presences. The hour of death is never spoken of as such a *coming*. (See our note, John xiv, 3.) Yet perseverance to the end of our probation is perseverance even to the judgment day. Note on Matt. xxiv, 13. So, (verse 10,) faithfulness unto death is faithfulness unto the final reward. And (verse 11) overcoming in life is verbally connected, instantaneously, with the eternal deliverance. The two things—the probation and the reward, the life passed and the coming to judgment—are connected as antecedent and consequent, irrespective of time. The intermediate time is dropped out of thought, and the close of life and the commencement of the eternal state are joined in unbroken connection. For the Thyatirans **to hold fast** until their closing hour, was to **hold fast till I come.** So next verse.

26. **Unto the end**—Of his life trial. **Power over the nations**—Identification with the Son of God, who is heir of all the promises of the second psalm.

27. **Rule them with a rod of iron**—In the Hebrew (Psa. ii, 9) the promise is, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron." But the Septuagint translators render the Hebrew word for "break," by a word signifying to *superintend them as a shepherd*, or briefly, for want of better English, to *shepherd them.* This was a mistake founded on the sameness of the consonants of the two different Hebrew words. That graceful mistake the heavenly speaker here accepts, and, in accordance with the milder spirit of the gospel dispensation, authorizes it. His sceptre (for so the word **rod** here imports) is a shepherd's crook, and yet its **iron** power, its absolute authority, still remains. What the nature of this **power over the nations** is, and what the *overcomer's* share in it, may be learned from our notes on Matt. xix, 28; 1 Cor. vi, 2; Rev. xix, 11–21; xx, 4.

28. **Give him the morning star**—The beautiful announcer that the night is past and the day is come. This blessed token shall be given to the overcomer as he passes through every crisis of the long contest. Its promise cheers the living warrior here on the field; and when he comes **unto the end** it will beam with its assurance that "eternity dawns, and the kingdom is his." And when he comes to the **new heavens and new earth,** (xxii, 1,) he will find that **the morning star,** so given him, was no other than Jesus himself. See xxii, 16.

CHAPTER III.

AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These

V. SARDIS.—*The Church of deadness, with a few spotless names*, 1–6.

1. **Sardis**—Thirty miles to the southeast from Thyatira, crossing the river Hermus, would bring our St.

things saith he [a]that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; [b]I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest,

[a] Chap. 1. 4, 16; 4. 5; 5. 6.

[b] Chapter 2. 2.

John, in his apostolic circuit, to the renowned city of Sardis. He would find it situated between the Hermus and the mountain range of Tmolus. Into the Hermus flows the small river Pactolus, from whose "golden sands" it was anciently reported that Crœsus largely derived his riches. But Brewer remarks that the sands are sparkling with grains of mica, and suspects that what so glittered in ancient times was not "all gold." Crœsus, he thinks, drew his wealth from the rich alluvium of Hermus, rather than from the "fool's gold" of the Pactolus.

The renown of Sardis was at its zenith under Crœsus, who was king of all Lydia, by descent from an ancient line. From the record of his wealth we still utter the proverb, "rich as Crœsus." Celebrated, also, is the visit to his court of Solon, the Athenian philosopher and statesman. Of him Crœsus asked whom he considered the happiest of men, expecting himself to be named. But Solon gave him answer, remembered by him on his dying day, that none could be pronounced truly happy until he had finished his course of life. Celebrated, too, is the ambiguity of the oracle by which he was deceived to his ruin. When he asked the god if he should fight Cyrus, he was told that if he crossed the river Halys in war he would destroy a great empire. He crossed, to find that the great empire to be destroyed was not that of Cyrus, but his own. Overcome by Cyrus, Lydia and all western Asia fell under the power of the Persians. For some centuries after, the richness of its soil retained its existence as a city, but at the present time it is a profound solitude. "Rarely," says Svoboda, "can the site of any ancient city so impress the traveller with a sense of astonishment at its stupendous desolation, as does the aspect of Sardis at the present day. Once... its splendour gained for it the title of the Queen of Asia... Here, indeed, all must acknowledge that the prophecy of the Apocalypse has been fulfilled to the letter." About seventy years after the publication of this Apocalypse, one of the brightest ornaments of the Christian Church was Melito, Bishop of Sardis. He was eminent for piety, learning, and talent; and his writings, some of which are still extant, are wonderful for the variety of subjects discussed by his active mind. They treated, among other things, upon faith, Easter, the first day of the week, the soul and body, the birth of Christ, the incarnation, and Satan. And it is here to be specially noted, that, severe as this letter to this Angel of Sardis is, Melito wrote a comment upon this Apocalypse, not now extant, but unquestionably accepting it as the work of our apostle John.

Hath the seven spirits of God—The two ascriptions here claimed by the Lord are appropriated from John's descriptions in i, 4–16. The Holy Spirit in its sevenfoldness in him dwells, and the sevenfold Churches, searched, judged, sanctified, or rejected by that Spirit, are in his hand. This is a most solemn awakening style and title with which the epistle to the dead Churches is preluded. And the sevenfoldness, both of the Spirit and the Churches, suggests that all Churches are here typically represented. **I know**—With all the intensity, omniscience, and purity of the Spirit. **I know thy works**—External and internal. **Hast a name**—The word **name** is thrice used in this epistle. Perhaps the last of the three (verse 5) explains the first two, the written **name.** The metaphor of verse 5 is drawn from the register-book of cities, in which every citizen's name was written, and erased at his death or disfranchisement for crime. The Sardian **angel,** implying also his Church, had a recorded **name** among the Churches, and that implied life; and yet they were **dead.** Yet this **dead** did not mean the fulness of *death*, but

[c]and art dead. **2** Be watchful, and [d]strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. **3** [e]Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and [f]repent.

[g]If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. **4** Thou hast [h]a few names even in Sardis which have not [i]defiled their garments; and they shall walk with

[c] Eph. 2. 1, 5; 1 Tim. 5. 6.—[d] Deut. 3. 28; Job 4. 4, 5; 16. 5.—[e] 1 Tim. 6. 20; 2 Tim. 1. 13; verse 11.—[f] Verse 19.

[g] Matt. 24. 42, 43; 25. 13; Mark 13. 33; Luke 12. 39, 40; 1 Thess. 5. 2, 6; 2 Pet. 3. 10; chapter 16. 15.—[h] Acts 1. 15.—[i] Jude 23.

deadness, lifelessness, which was rapidly becoming *death*. This is implied in the next verse; for there were some things **ready to die,** and there was supposed life enough **to strengthen** and re-enliven them. And it is to this revival of life that the promise of not being *blotted out*, in verse 5, is given.

2. **Be watchful**—Literally, *become wakeful;* wake up, be wide awake. For this deadness is a sleep; the fumes of which may, and should, be right speedily dispersed. **Strengthen** — Make firm, solidify. **Things** — Not *persons*, as many excellent commentators aver, but **things:** the Christian virtues, ordinances, aggressive movements. Revive all the early zeal by which the membership was holy, the Church strong, sinners were saved, and the gospel spread. These were now relaxed and **ready to die. Perfect**—Not the usual Greek word for **perfect**; but for *filled up*. It supposes a measure, a capacity, like a vessel which was not, but should be, completely filled with performed duties.

3. **How thou hast received**—Or rather, *didst receive*, namely, when the gospel first came to you. And the meaning is not, (as some interpret,) remember *what* you received, that is, the matter; but truly, **how** you **received**; that is, the spirit and manner. He reminds them, as he does the Ephesians, of their "first love." Compare Gal. iv, 13–15. **And heard**—Refers more to the matter, namely, the true apostolic tradition of the gospel. **Hold fast**—Firmly with your original maintenance. **Repent** — Recognise and reverse your sinful decline. **I...as a thief**—The comparison originated by no other than our Lord himself in regard to himself, Matt. xxiv, 43; Luke xii, 39. For who else would presume upon such a comparison without his example? Its primary application is to his judgment advent; and all its applications are to such a catastrophe as finally fixes the case of the man for that judgment. The judge then comes upon the sinner, repentance ceases to be possible, and the certainty of his final sentence is fixed. **Shalt not know**—Expect no other warning. The only safety is in watchfulness, constant preparedness, —as if the judgment day, at least through the gates of death, were here.

4. **A few names**—Recorded, perhaps baptismally, upon the Church parchments, (the earthly counterpart of the heavenly book of life,) and so here the word denoting the blessed owners of the **names. Defiled their garments**—As if one were walking with clean skirts through a dirty world, where the utmost care is necessary to "keep himself unspotted." James i, 27. **Shall walk with me**—Along the golden pavements of the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi, 21. **Walk with**—As in a public procession, or as two associates, in public view. **In white** — Not here indicating priesthood, although **white** was the colour of the priest in officiating. But the *white* of both the priesthood and the saints is an emblem, based on the natural idea of **white** as identical with purity. The white background presents the strongest contrast to all spot; and the white is associated with the cheerful and exhilarating colour of light, splendour, glory. All these stand in conceptual opposition to blackness, foulness, impurity, iniquity, wretchedness, woe. Hence in the primitive

me [k] in white: for they are worthy. **5** He that overcometh, [l] the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not [m] blot out his name out of the [o] book of life, but [o] I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. **6** [p] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things

k Chapter 4. 4; 6. 11; 7. 9, 13.——*l* Chapter 19. 8.——*m* Exod. 32. 32; Psa. 69. 28.

n Phil. 4. 3; chapter 13. 8; 17. 8; 20. 12; 21. 27.——*o* Matt. 10. 32; Luke 12. 8.——*p* Chapter 2. 7.

Church the candidate for baptism was dressed in white to indicate the professed purity of his Christian life. To live worthily was to preserve the whiteness of his robe; to commit sin was to stain it with a spot. Here the promise is, that the white garment of a well-sustained earthly life shall be exalted into the **white** garments of future glory. **Are worthy**—Justified by grace, and walking worthily of their high vocation, the Lord pronounces them **worthy.** Not that the best of our doing entitles us to heaven, but when we meet the conditions of grace, grace graciously pronounces us **worthy.** Note on Rom. iii, 27.

5. **White raiment**—A full and joyous expansion of the promise hinted in verse 4. On the brilliant **white** here implied—the whiteness of glory, the celestial coruscation — see note on iii, 18. On this Trench beautifully remarks: "As we cannot conceive of any room in heaven for raiment, in the literal sense of the word, we must understand by this that vesture of light, that clothing with light as with a garment, which shall be theirs who shall then 'shine out (ἐκλαμψουσι Matt. xiii, 43) as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;' their 'raiment,' and yet for all this, not something external to them, but the outward utterance of all which now, inwardly, they are who have left all sin behind them forever. The glorified body, defecated of all its dregs and all its impurities, transformed and transfigured into the likeness of Christ's body, (Phil. iii, 21,)—this, with its robe and atmosphere of light, is itself, I believe, the '*white raiment*,' which Christ here promises to his redeemed." Compare our note on 1 Cor. xv, 43, 44. **Blot out his name**—When the glorious vestments of the resurrection are put on, the citizenship in the New Jerusalem is sure, and the **name** in its city census, **the book of life,** can never be blotted out. For this image of *blotting*, see our note on Luke x, 20. **Will confess his name**—When the man presents himself in resurrection array there is his record in **the book,** and the Lord will **confess** that blessed owner of the **name,** will remember how unspotted was his vestment in the Church below, and will acknowledge his "title clear to mansions in the skies." **Before my Father . . . angels**—In presence of the celestial court shall he be introduced and recognised as belonging to the holy society of God, angels, and heaven. Such was the prospect of, alas! but **few** in this great city, the once rich capital of Lydia. The *many*, both in the Church and out, were facing toward a reverse future.

VI. PHILADELPHIA—*The faithful and blameless Church*, 7–13.

7 **Philadelphia**—On his apostolic journey our St. John, starting from Sardis, would travel a narrow strip—between the Cogamus river, a branch of the Hermus on his left, and the range of Tmolus mountains on the **right**—**thirty miles in length. He** would find the city ensconced like a nest in a narrow nook between river and mountain. See map.

Though one of the smallest and most modern of the **seven,** Philadelphia has a vividly interesting history. Its name, signifying *brotherly-love*, was a memento of the fraternal affection which existed between its founder, Attalus II., King of Pergamos, and his brother. It was daringly built in the katakekaumené, or *burnt district*, and so liable to perpetual earthquakes. It was nevertheless persistently inhabited, on account, probably, of the profitableness of its grapes and wines, which its soil

saith [q] he that is holy, [r] he that is true, he that hath [s] the key of David, [t] he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and [u] shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 [v] I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee [w] an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little

q Acts 3. 14.—r 1 John 5. 20; verse 14; chap. 1. 5; 6. 10; 19. 11.—s Isa. 22. 22; Luke 1. 32; chap. 1. 18.—t Matt. 16. 19.—u Job 12. 14.—v Verse 1.—w 1 Cor. 16. 9; 2 Cor. 2. 12.

richly produced. The American missionary Brewer, (from whose volume several of our cuts are derived,) in our time found it, however, fertile in wheat, opium, madder, and cotton. When the Persian Xerxes marched with his army of millions into Western Asia, for the conquest of Greece, he came to Philadelphia on his route. As the city stood at the head of the two valleys of the Hermus and the Meander, he could take either route. He here found a "plane tree" of such beauty, that he presented it with golden ornaments, and passed on by the northern route, which led to Sardis. The plane tree is still a flourishing product of this soil, and Svoboda tells us that the natives still make the sort of confection of honey, tamarisk, and wheat, which charmed the palate of Xerxes. In the reign of Tiberius all of Asia Minor suffered from tremendous earthquakes, and Tacitus tells us that Philadelphia was very nearly destroyed. When, in 1390, the Ottoman conqueror Bajazet, surnamed the Thunderer, overran Western Asia, this people, who lived over the slumbering earthquake, bravely met the assaults of the Thunderer. They were the last to capitulate to his arms. The present population of Philadelphia is fifteen thousand, one third Greeks. How, in modern times, these Greeks celebrate Christ and the resurrection, Brewer thus informs us: "It being Easter Sunday with the Greeks, we were aroused soon after midnight to witness, in the principal church, the celebration of Christ's resurrection. Here, as in other places, persons pass about the town at the appointed hour of night, and knock loudly at the door of every Christian dwelling. The usual round of ceremonies was gone through with, such as chanting of prayers, reading portions of Scripture, burning incense, lighting tapers and candles—some of the size of small trees—and moving in procession about the church and churchyard until the day dawned. Then the assembly broke up exclaiming, "*Christ has risen! Christ has risen!*" Afterward, during the day—and the practice is continued more or less for forty days—friends and strangers, in place of the customary forms of salutation, use the set Bible phrases, "*Christ has risen!*" "*He has risen indeed!*"

He that is holy—Not the usual New Testament word for holy, *ἅγιος*, but *ὅσιος*; and so not so much implying the sanctified life as the original absolute rightness of the divine Being. **He that is true**—True in himself, that is, *genuine*, and true in all his declarations, that is, veracious. As the revealer of God, the source of all revelation, he is both genuine and **true. Hath the key of David**—As David was the king—having both the sceptre and **the key** of old Jerusalem—so this Son of David has the sceptre and **the key** of the New Jerusalem. And as David's son he is heir of the theocracy; of the kingdom of God expanding from the old theocracy into a heavenly theocracy, and stretching into eternity. **Openeth, and no man shutteth**—A quotation and exaltation of Isa. xxii, 22, "The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." And so this King of the New Jerusalem alone has original control of the keys of the New Jerusalem, to admit or exclude according to his divine will. And so much more has he the key of this earthly kingdom of grace; and all true exercise of the power of the keys by human beings is but an acting as his agents.

8. **Set before thee an open door**—Namely, of divine entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem. **No...shut it**

strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. **9** Behold, I will make [x] them of the synagogue of Satan, which

x Chapter 2. 9.

—No persecutions can exclude them from entering to their **crown,** verse 11. **Hast** by my grace **a little strength** for entering the heavenly **door. And** in the use of that "gracious ability," **hast kept my word. Hast not,** amid faithlessness and persecution, **denied my name.** The Christian **name,** perhaps; which, long since adopted at Antioch, has been well maintained in Philadelphia. We are obliged with Stuart, and against Hengstenberg, Alford, and others, to maintain the correctness of our translation, **a little strength,** making it a commendation, rather than, by omitting the article, to read, **thou hast little strength,** making it a depreciation. Christ gives them the reward of an **open door** because of three good points; namely: their spiritual energy, however **little;** their keeping his **word;** and their sustaining his **name.** The entire drift of the three clauses is the same, namely: rewardable traits for which the everlasting **door** shall be **open** to them. To find this meaning in the **open door** may be disappointing to those who desire to read into it a temporal and present benefit promised. But most certainly a true reading will find, that from this **open door** to the **new Jerusalem** of verse 12 there is one straight line of thought, promising Philadelphia triumph, preservation, and abundant entrance, all solely at the second advent.

9. **Behold**—In view of this **little strength,** the **hast kept,** and the **not denied;** therefore **I will** give them a royal triumph in the New Jerusalem, to which the **open door** admits them. The triumph is expressed in an image drawn from Isa. lx, 14. "All they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel." When the developments of the judgment day are unfold-

say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, [y] I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have

y Isa. 49. 23; 60. 14.

ed, how will the despisers of the now humble Church acknowledge, with profound abasement, its true glory as the real city of God! The Jewish troublers of the Philadelphian Church are selected as the very present specimens of such "despisers," who are bound to "wonder and perish." **Say they are Jews**—And are so "after the flesh;" the which is now a nullity; but **are not** the spiritual Israel, which is now the only true Israel. **Worship before thy feet**—Of course no literal fact, but imaging the severe and final humiliation of all evil in presence of the truly good. In the judgment-day development the atheist will learn there is a God; the impenitent Jew will confess a true Jesus the Christ; the scorner will find there is a hell; and the haughty despiser of the weak and humble, yet pure Church, like our Philadelphians, will discover, to the sad reversal of his pride, that they were heirs of an eternal crown. When a great lady once spoke with contempt of Lady Huntingdon's associating with her conventicle of saints, one replied to her, "Madam, in the day of judgment you may be glad to grasp hold of Lady Huntingdon's skirts to draw you into heaven." **That I have loved**—They will recognise not only the **loved** in its true glory, but they will truly learn and know also this great **I,** whose love is the bliss of the heavenly world, as it makes the poor Philadelphian Church "the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One." The interpretation of Alford, which makes the **open door** an opening for missionary enterprise for propagating the gospel, and which holds verse 9 to describe the resulting conversion of their bitter Jewish opponents, seems inapplicable. It has, indeed, Paul's **open door,** 1 Cor. xvi, 9, 2 Cor. ii, 12, as an apparent precedent: but the opening and shutting of verse 7 clearly refer to the lordship

loved thee. **10** Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, [z] I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon [a] all the world, to try them that dwell [b] upon the earth. **11** Behold, [c] I come quickly: [d] hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take [e] thy crown. **12** Him that overcometh will I make [f] a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and [g] I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* [h] new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: [i] and *I will write upon him* my new name. **13** [k] He

[z] 2 Peter 2. 9.—[a] Luke 2. 1.—[b] Isa. 24. 17.—[c] Phil. 4. 5; chapter 1. 3; 22. 7, 12, 20.—[d] Verse 3; chap. 2. 25.—[e] Chap. 2. 10.

[f] 1 Kings 7. 21; Gal. 2. 9.—[g] Chapter 2. 17; 14. 1; 22. 4.—[h] Gal. 4. 26; Heb. 12. 22; chapter 21. 2, 10.—[i] Chapter 22. 4.—[k] Chapter 2. 7.

of Christ over the entrance into heaven, the New Jerusalem, (xxii,) and verse 8 can be no description of the happy conversion, but of the penal humiliation, in the final day, upon the incorrigible. And verses 10, 11, 12, continue the same line of thought, describing the rich final reward of Philadelphian faithfulness. Verse 10 promises preservation in the great day of the final trial; verse 11 describes the speed of its approach; verse 12 promises eternal security within the domain of heaven, beyond the day of trial.

10. **My patience** — So i, 9, "the patience of Jesus Christ," (if that be an allowed reading,) namely, a patience which is his and his followers. **Hast kept...keep thee**—The faithful work has its fitting reward; the keeper shall be kept. **Hour of temptation**—The Greek word for **temptation** may mean the presentation of agreeable inducements to sin before one's mind, in order to elicit sin; and so the devil tempts. Or it may mean the presentation of a test or trial, adverse or agreeable, to allow the will or character to display itself. So every fearful crisis brought upon us is a **temptation.** And especially that great crisis which precedes the **great white throne**, (xx, 11,) is a test, a trial, of the soul. The trial here described is mundane—**upon all the world**—and not in one nation or kingdom: is not merely a persecution in Asia Minor, but over the entire **world,** and upon all **that dwell upon the earth.** This is the same universality as in i, 7. The rich promise to the faithful Philadelphian is, that in that great ordeal he shall be kept from terror and despair.

11. **Quickly**—In i, 7 he is already visible in the cloudy firmament. **Take thy crown**—Not indeed gaining it for himself, though depriving thee of it.

12. **A pillar**—An, emblem of his unchangeable permanence in the final heaven; not limited to a few eminent rulers, like the "pillars" of Gal. ii, 9, but including every saint in the New Jerusalem. Such a **pillar** is not, like the Jachin and Boaz of Solomon's temple, outside, but inside—namely, of the living temple, the glorified Church. A tall pillar still stands a most conspicuous object in the city of Philadelphia, reminding the modern traveller of this passage, if it be not the source of the allusion. This permanence is explicitly expressed in the words **he shall go no more out.** He is, then, a fixed **pillar;** forever God's, whose **name** is written **upon him,** and **the name** also of the **city** which is to be his eternal home. *His* name is Jehovah, and *its* name is the **New Jerusalem,** whose glories are unfolded in xxii. In addition to **the name of my God,** Christ writes **upon him** his own **new name,** thus doubling the ownership; a **name,** as already said, which is not a mere word, but a *power;* namely, the full, final, glorifying *power* embraced in the word Jesus, Saviour, Redeemer, and which is **new** at the glorious resurrection in its renewing effect upon soul and body, and then will be forever and forever **new;** forever renewing the man in the image of Jesus. Thrice is the phrase **my God** here repeated; **my** as a term of claiming affection shared with Christ by all saints: **God,** as the primordial and eternal author and assurer

that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

14 And unto the angel of the church [1] of the Laodiceans write;

1 Or, *in Laodicea.*

of the whole great plan; thrice occurring as symbol of the divine threefoldness In the permanence of the heavenly system and the saints' abode, the whole Trinity is pledged, with all the omnipotence and immutability of God.

Though we find no temporal promises of prosperity to the little Church, yet it is historically true, that in the midst of the changes of war which have swept over this land, Philadelphia has had a wonderful preservation. The bravery of its inhabitants, whose home overlies the sleeping earthquakes, has ever signalized it in its own defences. On this subject see the impressive language of Gibbon. "In the loss of Ephesus, the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel, the extinction of the first candlestick, of the Revelation; the desolation is complete; and the temple of Diana or the Church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveller. The circus and the three stately theatres of Laodicea are now peopled with wolves and foxes; Sardis is reduced to a miserable village; the God of Mohammed, without a rival or a son, is invoked in the mosques of Thyatira and Pergamos, and the populousness of Smyrna is supported by the foreign trade of the Franks and the Armenians. Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy or courage. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom above fourscore years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and Churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins—a pleasing example that the paths of honour and safety may sometimes be the same." When Brewer visited the place, in 1831, he found the Greek population about 2,000 souls, being three or four hundred families, amid as many thousand Turkish. "As a whole they have, for a century or two past, had a good **name** among travellers as a civil and hospitable people."

VII. LAODICEA — *Rich in goods, but poor in faith.* 14–22.

14. Laodicea — From Philadelphia our apostle in his circuit would range to the south-east through a journey of fifty or sixty miles to the capital of Phrygia, the rich and powerful Laodicea. In so doing he would cross from the Hermus over a mountain range into the fertile valley of the river Meander, a river whose varying course has given our language a verb, "to meander." He would find a great city, which, under the Roman sway, had continually grown in power. He would also find, to all appearance, a rich and proud Church, whose Christianity had assumed a stereotype and inactive form. The Apostolic Constitutions (viii, 46) say, that Archippus was then Bishop of Laodicea. And it seems to some a coincidence that in Colossians iv, 17, St. Paul appears to imply that he was a remiss minister. Hengstenberg finds, not wisely, an allusion to his name in the word ἀρχὴ, verse 14. Laodicea was one of a triangle of neighbouring city Churches; including Colosse, to which Paul had addressed an epistle, and Hierapolis, visible from the summit of the Laodicean theatre, and where Papias was, soon after St. John's day, a bishop. St. Paul in his epistle to Colosse salutes the brethren in Laodicea, and requires his epistle to be read in the Church of the Laodiceans, with an exchange. See note on Col. iv, 16. Laodicea was founded in the third century before Christ by Antiochus II., king of Syria, and so named after his wife. It submitted to Rome, and in the war of Mithridates, king of Pontus, stood a siege against that monarch. It had been (A. D. 62) overthrown by an earthquake, but was munificently patronized by the Roman emperors, and its theatres, aqueducts, and churches have left magnificent ruins for the eye of the modern travel-

[l] These things saith the Amen, [m] the faithful and true witness, [n] the beginning of the creation of God; **15** [o] I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or

l Isa. 65. 16.—*m* Chap. 1. 5; 19. 11; 22. 6; verse 7.—*n* Col. 1. 15.—*o* Verse 1.

ler and the spade of the excavator. Perhaps Laodicea listened to the voice of the Lord, woke to action, and became a powerful Church. A bishop and martyr, Sagaris, (A. D. 170,) is mentioned by Eusebius. About the middle of the fourth century the Council of Laodicea assumed to settle the New Testament Canon, in which it is remarkable that our Apocalypse was denied a place. **The Amen**—The divine affirmative One. So in Isa. lxv, 16, "The God of Truth," in the Hebrew "*The God of Amen.*" In 2 Cor. i, 20, Christ is the medium through whom our obedient **amen** goes up to God; here he is the intervening, affirming **Amen,** affirming God's truth, to us. The "verily" so often repeated by our Lord in the gospels, is in the Greek **amen;** and it is remarkable that in John's Gospel it is always doubled, **verily, verily, amen, amen. Faithful and true witness**—A title preparing us for a **faithful and true** testimony to Laodicea respecting her character and spiritual condition. **Beginning of the creation**—A sublime declaration of the divine authority from which that testimony comes. A **beginning** of a series of things, taken passively, is the first one in that series. In that sense Christ would be the first created being in the series of creation. Taken actually, as that which originates the series, then the series does not include, but takes existence from, him. In that case Christ is the originator of the creation, uncreated. How John understands it we may well learn from the very first verse of his Gospel. In the opening words, "In the beginning was the Word," the same Word, ἀρχη, is used as here, and its subject precedes creation. And in the third verse we are told that "the world was made by him," namely, the Word, who **was in the beginning.**

15. **Neither cold nor hot**—The metaphor is taken from water, which, when cold or **hot,** (*boiling,* ζεστός, from ζέω, to *boil,*) may be palatable, but nauseating when **lukewarm.** But it is a serious problem, the difficulty of which is liable to be overlooked, What is that *coldness* which the Lord prefers to lukewarmness? Lukewarmness itself is that indifference which we commonly call *coldness* of religious state; and so this **cold** must be something *colder,* something implying the absence of even that degree of warmth implied in the equilibrium of indifference. Hence Düsterdieck, followed by Alford, represents it to be a state of actual unregeneracy, of "enmity and opposition" to Christ! And the reason assigned is, that it is easier to convert the enemy than it is to rouse a lukewarm Christian to **heat;** a reason overwhelmingly contrary to experience. Düsterdieck's illustration is: "Saul was **cold** when he persecuted; and when he became Paul he was **hot.**" So it was easier for Saul to become Paul, than for a lukewarm Christian to become hot! But Paul had a troop of followers as **cold** as himself, none of whom would warm into conversion, leaving him an exceptional case. But how absurd to make the Lord wish this Church to be as Jewish persecutors, or heathen; like the world around them, rather than a Christian Church, even in its lukewarm phase! On the contrary, Hengstenberg's view very nearly solves the problem. Not the *coldness* of the unregenerate, or the apostate, but the coldness of one still a Christian. In this Laodicean coldness there is not only the condition, but the Christian consciousness, of the **cold,** which is an uncomfortableness, and negatively, at least, feels the need of heat. He is, therefore, dissatisfied, and is more easily disturbed into repentance and zeal, than the man who was at once **cold** and *warm* enough to be satisfied and self-determined in his indifference. It is not the coldness, as a fact, but the coldness, as a *feeling,* which grounds

hot. **16** So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, [p] I will spew thee out of my mouth. **17** Because thou sayest, [q] I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: **18** I counsel thee [r] to buy of me gold tried

p Jer. 14. 19; Zech. 11. 8, 9.—q Hos. 12. 8; 1 Cor. 4. 8.—r Isa. 55. 1; Matt. 13. 44; 25. 9.

the Lord's preference. The *feeling* may be latent, only an unconscious susceptibility; but it is a susceptibility responsive to an awakening appeal.

16. **I will spew**—Literally, *I am about to* **spew**; implying that the rejection is delayed, perhaps to allow time for repentance, yet is nigh at hand. It seems to be a threat of removal of the Church, implying, but not expressing, individual condemnation for each in the final day.

17. **Because** may assign reason for the charge of lukewarmness in the last verse; or it may refer forward to next verse, and would correspond with a *therefore* inserted before **I** of verse 18. **Because thou sayest,** etc., therefore **I counsel,** etc. The Lord's **counsel** is infinitely better than their *say*. **I am rich**—The question is raised by commentators whether these are boasts over material or spiritual goods. Earlier commentators, as Bengel, Stuart, and others, take the former view; later ones, as Hengstenberg, Düsterdieck, and Trench, the latter. We think the old is better. The true idea certainly is, that in reply to their boasts of earthly goods, our Lord advises them to secure the heavenly. For, 1. This accords with our Lord's style during his earthly ministry. So Matt. vi, 19, 20: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth; ... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Of the rich fool, Luke xii, 21, he says, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." 2. This jubilant boasting is not the style of lukewarmness over its spiritual wealth, for the very idea of lukewarmness is indifference to spiritual things. So Stuart wisely and conclusively says, "There are, and have been, indeed, many spiritual boasters in the world; but then they are for the most part men of an enthusiastic turn of mind, and commonly have much fervor, such as it is; whereas the Laodicean Church are plainly characterized as worldling-Christians; grown lukewarm as to divine things." To say that this Church was indifferent to spiritual things and yet thus fervently boasted of its spiritual goods, is a contradiction. Enthusiastic boasting and indifference are opposites. 3. It is evident that Laodicea was a flourishing city, growing rich under the munificence of the Roman emperors. There can be little doubt that the tide of wealth poured into the pockets and coffers of the Church: the natural danger, without great caution, would be to make her pecuniarily rich and spiritually poor. How easy it was to be liberal in feeling to the liberal paganism by which it was patronized, and to slide into doubt about the importance of being Christians! Quite as easy would it be to exult over the rich incomes flowing into their purses and filling their homes with luxury. **Rich ... increased with goods ... need of nothing**—A glowing and towering climax. **Knowest not**—Realizest not that, though in pocket a millionaire, in soul thou art a pauper! Our Lord demolishes the proud climax with a series of humiliating adjectives. **Wretched** — Intrinsically miserable. **Miserable** — The object of pity from others. By the best readings the first of these two adjectives, and perhaps the second, should have the article before it. The meaning then would be, **thou art** *the wretched and pitiable one.* Then the last three adjectives would follow as characterizing that *one.* Then the three **poor, blind, naked,** would balance against the previous **rich, increased,** and **need of nothing.**

18. In view of their boasts of temporal wealth the Lord gives them **counsel** to secure eternal goods. **Buy**—They are **rich** by material

in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and [s] white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. **19** [t] As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore,

[s] 2 Cor. 5. 3; chapter 7. 13; 16. 15; 19. 8.—[t] Job 5. 17; Prov. 3. 11, 12; Heb. 12. 5, 6; James 1. 12.

trade; suppose they now "buy the truth and sell it not." In view of their **poor, blind,** and **naked** condition, let them secure **gold, eyesalve,** and **white raiment.** Trench, though interpreting verse 17 as boasting of spiritual **goods,** has here an excellent note, which clearly shows that he ought to have interpreted it of the temporal. "To the merchants and factors of this wealthy mercantile city he addresses himself in their own dialect Laodicea was a city of extensive money transactions; Cicero, journeying to or from his province, proposes to take up money there. (*Ep. ad Div.* ii, 17; iii, 5.) Christ here invites to dealings with him He has gold so fine that none will reject it. The wools of Laodicea, of raven blackness, were famous throughout the world; but he has raiment of dazzling **white** for those who will put it on. There were ointments for which certainly many of the Asiatic cities were famous; but he, as he will presently announce, has eyesalve more precious than them (they?) all." All this shows that the passage contrasts a spiritual wealth, in verse 18, with a boast of temporal wealth, in verse 17. **Gold tried in the fire**—Rather, *from* **the fire,** as if just withdrawn from the fire, and so fresh and brilliant. **White raiment**—Note on iii, 5. **Shame of thy nakedness**—Vivid image of the "shame and everlasting contempt" of the great moral exposures at the judgment day.

The images of spiritual wealth here are susceptible of specific application. The pure, well tried **gold** may represent *faith,* the condition of all salvation, and which, when pure and well tried by experience, becomes a fidelity, and a saving perseverance and ripening for heaven. The **white raiment** is the divine justification from faith, the robe of righteousness, which approves itself as **white** before men—as pure and right—and before God as acceptable for eternal life. The **eyesalve** is the spirit of discernment, the blended gift of the Spirit and of personal experience, by which things are seen as they truly are in the light of eternity.

19. **As many as I love**—Imperfect as Laodicea's character was, she was still Christian. She was not on a level with the paganism around her. She was still a witness for Christ, maintaining his name, holding fast his gospel, and retaining a candlestick for a richer supply of oil and a purer blaze. Even the form of religion is better than nothing, since it may stand as a future vehicle of the coming spirit and power.

We here, too, may see that there is a state of faulty sonship, of imperfect justification, in which, though the name be not blotted out of the "book of life," yet it beams but dimly on the divine page, and is in great danger of disappearing. The divine Father still recognises his son, but treats him with rebuke, displeasure, and discipline. Not every sin after justification forfeits the sonship. Nay, there are higher and lower grades of Christian life. This Mr. Wesley well and fully shows in his sermon on "Sin in Believers." The true test is, Does justifying faith remain, even in spite of short-comings?

And it follows from all this, that if there is a lower grade of Christian life, like that of Sardis and Laodicea, so there is a higher, like that of Smyrna and Philadelphia. In the case of Smyrna the approval is complete; not a blame is imputed, not a shadow is cast between the approving face of the Lord and that beloved Church. There is, then, a state of complete acceptance with Christ, of perfect justification, in which the Lord finds no fault, and bestows the blessed testimony of his unqualified approval. The accep-

and repent. **20** Behold, [u]I stand at the door, and knock: [v]if any man hear my voice, and open the door, [w]I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. **21** To him that overcometh

[u] Cant. 5. 2.—[v] Luke 12. 37.

[w] John 14. 23.

tance is as perfect as it was at the moment when first our sins were swept away, and we were justified from all sin. And now sanctification, holiness, or what is sometimes called entire sanctification, is the *power*, through the Spirit, of retaining with more or less permanence that state of complete acceptance, without a cloud between the soul and Christ. This implies, not an absolute sinlessness on our part, as tried by absolute law, but a perfect approval on Christ's part, according to the standard of gospel grace. The law still stands immutable; but if there come a condemnation for our shortcomings from the absolute law, there comes, also, a constant flow of love and pardon from the grace of Christ, which neutralizes that condemnation. Yet the law still stands to condemn our positive sins, and to separate us utterly from the love of Christ and consign us to hell, upon our apostasy from the faith.

Bengel notes the different Greek terms for **love** addressed to the Philadelphians, (ἠγάπησε,) and to the Laodiceans, (φιλεῖ,) on which see our note, John xxi, 15–17. The former is the love of estimation and approval, the latter of mere graciousness, the former being the more honouring to its object. Yet as addressed by Peter to his Lord, the latter was the tenderer and deeper term.

I rebuke and chasten—He does not cast off for every shortcoming, nor blot out his justification for every sin, so long as faith and sonship remain. Nay, the author of the Book of Hebrews, quoting this same passage from Proverbs, adds, that the being unrebuked by God is proof that we are not his legitimate children. Heb. xii, 5, 6. **Rebuke** — Rather, *convince;* make the fault so clear that the offender cannot but see it. **Chasten**—Apply the severe corrective, perhaps the rod, where the rebuke fails. **Zealous**—The zeal of conviction by the **rebuke;** leading to the **repent,** in view or in consequence of the **chasten.**

20. **Behold** — The apparently broken connexion between this and the former verses of this address will be restored, if we consider the verse as a quotation from Solomon's Song, v, 2–6. The Church of Laodicea is represented by the sleepy bride at whose door the bridegroom *knocks*, but she is so remiss that she opens the door too late, for he is gone. She says, "It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my love; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." The allusion shows to Laodicea the love between the Saviour and the Church, but the fearful danger of a deferred welcome to him. **I stand at the door, and knock**—There is a wonderful pathos in the picture. It is the supplicator Christ. It is night, and the darkness and damps are falling upon him. He is rejected by the sons of men almost the entire world round, and comes for admission at the door of one who professes to love him. **If any man**—Of the Laodicean Church immediately, of the whole world inferentially. **Open the door**—For, though Lord of all power, he will never force the door open. There is a solemn **if** which every **man** must decide for himself. **I will**—God's **will** is to **knock;** and if man's will is to **open,** then comes Christ's **will** to **come in. Sup**—The evening dinner, as we may say; the principal meal of the day. **With him**—As his guest. **He with me**—As my guest; I being truly his host. And, continuing the reference to Solomon's Song, this is the *supper* of Christ and his bride, the Church; the marriage supper of the Lamb, which is symbolically ever repeating itself here, but plenarily consummated at the resurrection of the just. Note 19.

21. **To him that overcometh** — The last and most glorious promise to the victor. **With me in my**

[x] will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. **22** [y] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

[x] Matt. 19. 28; Luke 22. 30; 1 Cor. 6. 2; 2 Tim. 2. 12; chapter 2. 26. 27.—[y] Chapter 2. 7.

throne—The throne being extended like a sofa, and competent to contain many sitters. **Overcame**—For us, we conquering in his victory, reigning with his sceptre, and sitting upon his **throne.** For, while we form a vivid image of this co-session of the saints with Christ, we are to understand it only as an image of the truth that, through Christ's merits and mercy the saints are to be raised to a glory under his headship, of which priesthood, white garments, kingdom, sceptres, and thrones are the symbols, not the exact literality. **Father ... throne**—Note on xxi, 1.

22. **He that hath an ear**—The last clear ring of this refrain sounding through the world and through the ages.

PART SECOND.

THE THEOPHANIC APOCALYPSE.

CHAPTER IV.

The Theophany in divine royal state, 1-6.

The scene of the Apocalypse opens with a presentation of GOD *enthroned*, surrounded with his glorious Court of ministers, seated for the purpose of *opening the predictive seals* from which are presented the pictorial phases of the Messianic dispensation. He who as omnipresent fills all space, selects a point of manifestation, and puts on a semblance of finite personality in order to disclose a view of a special futurity. This is a throne, not of judgment but of REVELATION. Through the entire series of seals the dark side of future history is indeed symbolized; yet is this dark side gloriously contrasted with the bright side in chapter vii. So that the chapters of the **seals** and of the **sealing**—namely, the sixth and seventh—are to be read as one contrastive picture.

1. **After this**—Rather, **after** *these things;* that is, the revelations of the

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in

entire previous chapters. There has been a brief cessation of the state expressed by the phrase **in the Spirit,** i, 10; which state is now resumed in verse 2. In that interval the seer is merely susceptible to impressions from the spiritual world, but not receiving them until the **door opened** appears; the entering of which is becoming **in the Spirit.** This inspired visional state continues uninterrupted through Parts Second and Third. **Behold, a door was opened**—Rather, *there was an opened door.* The **door** was already open when the seer's eye first rested upon it. It was the symbolic entrance into the **heaven** of symbolic exhibition. For the scope of that heaven see note to verse 11. Düsterdieck denies that the **door** implies a temple, but rather God's residential house. Our own view is, that the **door** implies that we in this physical world are outside, and that there is an inner, more real world, into which the spirit can be made to enter, where the limitations of sense and matter may be diminished and even fully removed, and the truths of eternity may be cognized. We attain this spiritual scene through the **door** of death: John entered it while in the body; yet being in the body he entered it only so far as to be capable of cognizance of truths through divinely-presented figures and sounds. Düsterdieck thinks that there is a clear distinction made by St. John between the formula *After these things I saw*, and, *And I saw*, the former being the introduction of a new scene, the latter an additional phase or point of the same scene. The distinction, however, cannot be very broadly made. The former phrase is used in vii, 1, 10, but at verse 10 there is certainly a continuance of same scene. Same phrase at xv, 5; xviii, 1. *And I saw*, is used v, 1, 6, 11; vi, 1, 5, 8, 9, 12; viii, 2, 13·

THE THEOPHANIC THRONE.

heaven: and [a]the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, [b]Come up hither, [c]and I will show

a Chapter 1. 10.——*b* Chapter 11. 12.——*c* Chapter 1. 19; 22. 6.

ix, 1; x, 1; xiii, 11; xiv, 6, 14; xv, 1, 2; xvii, 6; xix, 11, 17, 19; xx, 1, 4, 11; xvi, 1. Chapters xiii, 1 and xvii, 3, introduce a new scene with, *And I saw.* **Behold...the first voice which I heard** — Rather, *Lo, the voice which I heard at first;* namely, at i, 10. The same unknown **voice** that introduced St. John to the Christophany, introduces him now to the Theophany. **Come up hither**—Ascend from the earth's surface, at least in spiritual conception, and enter the scene of **show. Which must be**—A compound necessity is implied in this **must be.** They **must be,** partly because there will be free agents who will bring them into existence, and this is a dependent necessity, dependent on the free will of the agent possessing power to do otherwise. They **must be,** also, because the free nature of the agent and his free act being foreknown and assumed, the divine will has determined its own infinitely wise action in reference thereto. There is no absolute predestination in all this, except that divine predetermination to act wisely in view of the freedom. See notes on Rom. ix. **Hereafter** — Literally, *after these* **things;** the *these* **things** differing from the *these* **things** in the first clause of the verse, and meaning the **things** of the present time.

2. **Immediately**—On ascending and entering the **door. In the Spirit**—If this means his own **spirit,** then the thought is, that his consciousness, withdrawing from all perceptions of the things of sense, concentrated itself into the higher realm of **the spirit,** and, entering into full sympathy with the divine **Spirit,** became fully perceptive of things in the supersensible world, and especially of a series of symbols presented by the divine **Spirit** to the eye of his **spirit. A throne was set**—Literally, **was** *lying;* again the thing is there in the position before seen by

thee things which must be hereafter. **2** And immediately [d]I was in the Spirit: and, behold, [e]a throne was set in heaven, and *one*

d Chapter 1. 10; 17. 3; 21. 10.——*e* Isa. 6. 1; Jer. 17. 12; Ezek. 1. 26; 10. 1; Dan. 7. 9.

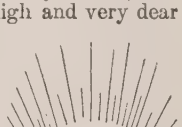
the seer. Bengel says, the term *lying* is applied to the **throne,** from its breadth; to which Düsterdieck replies, that the same term is used in the Septuagint, Jer. xxiv, 1, in John ii, 6, xix, 29, and in the classics; and so is the ordinary term to express a *throne's* position. Nevertheless, it may be, and probably is, we think, from the breadth of the ancient thrones, (upon which more than one could sit, Rev. iii, 21,) that the term became ordinary. **One sat**—Unnamed: not merely (as Alford and others) because the writer strictly narrates "only what he saw," though that was measurably true. The **one** was doubtless both unseen and unnamed for the same reason, namely, as says Herder, finely, "the mind has no figure and the tongue no word by which to express him." The seer beholds and describes only the colours of the dense glory that indicates his presence. It is true, as Düsterdieck objects, that the same withholding of name appears with regard to Christ in i, 13–20, and following two chapters, also, perhaps, in the angelophany of chapter x, where see note. And that, we reply, is from a similar reverent mystery suited to Christ, who is designated with a whole cluster of glorious paraphrases, but never by his proper name. Here the symbolic mystery of reverence as suited to God is sublimely expressed by Herder's words. Nor is its reality at all affected, as Düsterdieck supposes, by the fact that elsewhere the occupant of the throne is explicitly named; see vii, 10, 15; xii, 5; xix, 4, xxii, 1. The symbolic purpose is none the less intended here because it is not preserved elsewhere. The purpose is here the same as it was in the Holy of Holies—namely, to symbolize the truth of divine Personality and specialty of Presence, yet to refuse all specific form, which would authenticate idolatry.

sat on the throne. **3** And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: [f]and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. **4** [g]And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, [h]clothed in white raiment; [i]and they had on their heads crowns of gold. **5** And out of the throne proceeded [k]light-

[f] Ezek. 1. 28.—[g] Ch. 11. 16.—[h] Ch. 3. 4, 5; 6. 11; 7. 9, 13, 14; 19. 14.—[i] Ver. 10.—[k] Ch. 8. 5; 16. 18.

3. **Like a jasper**—Not in solidity, but in picturesque hue. The **jasper** is a species of quartz, of various colours, and sometimes transparent as crystal, xxi, 11. Alford says, "It represents a watery crystalline brightness." The **sardine,** or carnelian, is, says Epiphanius, "fire-red and blood-red." Meyer, quoted by Hengstenberg, says: "The red colour is light in its intrinsic unfolding, light in warmth, light in love, or in its opposite, anger." The crystalline **jasper** thus represents the purity of the divine nature; the red carnelian its sensibility—its wrath and its love exercised toward sin or holiness in responsible beings. The **rainbow**—symbol of the covenant—with its seven prismatic hues, yet with the soft green **like unto an emerald** predominant, represents the divine mercy. **Round about the throne**—Horizontally, says Hengstenberg; vertically, says Alford. We think the former clearly right. Around the nebulæ of jasper and carnelian hues there circled a horizontal halo of soft green, in which the seven streaks of the **rainbow** were visible, leaving the throne somewhat visible, but no form of its Occupant. Thus far we have picture of the divine Presence; now for the attendants.

4. **Round about the throne**—Forming a full circle, at such distance from **the throne** as to make an area **in the midst. Seats**—*Thrones:* the same Greek word as for **the throne** just mentioned. For these **elders** are kings, with both *thrones* and **crowns of gold**—royal elders, "kings and priests." Their lesser thrones surround the greater **throne,** as in fealty to the great King. **Four and twenty**—The twice twelve of the Old Testament and the New Testament Church, the patriarchal and apostolic twelve. See our note on symbolic numbers, at close of Luke vi. Says Bossuet, (quoted by Hengstenberg,) "It is the totality of the saints of the Old and New Testament Church who are here represented by their chiefs and elders. The same totality of saints is represented in the twelve gates of the holy city, on which were written the names of the twelve tribes, and in the foundation of that city, on which were written the names of the twelve apostles, xxi, 12, 14. In a word, one sees in these twenty-four elders the whole Church in its leaders." And as throned and crowned, they represent the Church of all ages, both militant and triumphant. The delightful import of the symbol is, that the Church is very nigh and very dear to God in his administration of the governments of the world. **Crowns**—The **crown** proper of the New Testament (*στέφανος*, from *στέφω*, to wreathe or weave a garland or chaplet) was originally used for honour to a victor or ruler, and adopted as an ensign of royalty. Different was the *diadem,* (from *δια, around,* and *δεω, to bind,*) which was originally a tie around the heads of oriental monarchs, and, being far more imperial, was adopted by the Emperor Diocletian and his successor as matter of regal pride. The Greek for *diadem* is used in only three passages in the New Testament, namely, xii, 3, of the dragon; xiii, 1, of the beast; and xix, 12, of the Messiah.



5. **Proceeded**—Greek, in the present tense, *go forth,* as an ordinary or constant phenomenon. The **lightnings, thunderings, and voices,** (for such is the order of the words by the best reading,) are symbols of God's omnipotence. **Seven lamps**—*Torches*

nings and thunderings and voices: [l] and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are [m] the seven spirits of God. **6** And before the throne *there was* [n] a sea of glass like unto crystal: [o] and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts, full of eyes before [p] and behind.

l Exodus 37. 23; 2 Chron. 4. 20; Ezek. 1. 13; Zech. 4. 2.——*m* Chap. 1. 4; 3. 1; 5. 6.

n Exod. 38. 8; chapter 15. 2.——*o* Ezek. 1. 5.——*p* Verse 8.

Fire—The emblem of the searching, purifying power of the Spirit. Note Matt. iii, 11. The Sitter on the throne, the seven Spirits, and the Lamb, present the three divine personalities. **Seven spirits**—See note on i, 4.

6. **There was** (*as it were*) **a sea of glass**—The Old Testament passage to which this seems to be analogous is Exodus xxiv, 10: "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire-stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness." The idea, then, is, that this apparent **sea of glass like unto crystal**, is the transparent basis of the throne. God's throne should not stand on base earth, but upon a condensed ethereality. So the Rabbies say: "The place on which his throne stands is seven clouds of glory." The Orientals are proud to this day of the splendour of their tessellated pavements. The Koran (Sur. xxvii, 44) tells us that the queen of Sheba mistook Solomon's pavement, in his audience hall, for a *sea*. (See Stuart.) To the idea that this **sea** is a basal pavement of the throne, Düsterdieck objects that it is described as **before** the throne. But the seer being in the far front describes the part he more distinctly sees, the part which more specially isolates the occupant from the attendants surrounding him. This clear, tranquil sea symbolizes the divine purity and serenity; and, indeed, derives its character from his divine, everlasting nature. Hence, it may be held as the primal fountain of the crystal stream of life in xxii, 1. And its sympathy with the divine Mind is symbolized by the wrathful "fire," infused into the *glass*, in xv, 2. So small a crystal surface might hardly be called a **sea**; but our thought from this small revealed spot necessarily extends its existence beyond all limits. **In the midst...round...the throne**—Hengstenberg and Stuart represent the throne as upborne by the **four** beneath it. This is in clear contradiction to the words, Ἐν μέσῳ, which mean **in midst**, namely, of the circular area, whose circumference was formed by the thrones of the twenty-four, and which belonged as basis to, and was held by the seer as part of, the **throne** itself. Within this area, at each of the four corners of the structure of the throne, stood one of the cherubim. But Düsterdieck understands by **in the midst**, that the cherubim stood one at each of the four sides, (at the *mid-point* between the two ends of the side,) so as to be **round about the throne. Four beasts**—The word **beasts** presents one of the most unfortunate translations to be found in our English Bible. It is altogether a different word from the "beast," θηρίον, of chap. xiii; being ζῶον, from which comes our word zoology, and comprehends every thing finite possessed of intelligent life. It is thence by some rendered *living creatures;* but better, by Alford, *living beings*. The *creational* number **four** immediately suggests that these *beings* must represent all the *living beings* of our creation. This is confirmed by the fact that the most eminent species of the animal world are selected to afford the **four.** Of wild beasts the **lion** is king; of tame, the **ox**; of birds, the **eagle**; and of all earthly creatures, **man.** Hence, their anthem of thanks sung with the elders, is thanks for our creation. And of the three series of seven symbols—the seals, the trumpets, and the vials, to be hereafter presented—it will be found that each first *four* (in which the four *living beings* are specially interested) will be mainly connected with points on earth, and of a creational character; while each last *three* rises into a more

7 [q]And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beasts had each of them [r]six wings about *him;* and *they were* full of eyes [s]within: and

[q] Num. 2. 2, &c.; Ezek. 1. 10; 10. 14.

[r] Isaiah 6. 2.——[s] Verse 6.

elevated and fuller strain, for good or evil more spiritual, and suited to the **elders**, as the previous song was to the **beasts**.

The beasts, or cherubim; the four and twenty elders, 7-11.

7. **Lion...calf...man...eagle** — These four are the *cherubim*, the precedent of which will be found in the first chapter of Ezekiel. But the old prophet's cherubim had each one the four faces and the four wings. This, and the fact that in v, 8, they "fell down before the Lamb," suggests that these were human in form and animal only in face. They thus symbolize the living creation in its highest aspects and its relations to its Creator.

Cognate to this interpretation was the view of the early Church writers, that the cherubim represent the four Gospels. These Gospels are an earth-wide gospel; a gospel to be preached to every creature. They are to be spread to the "four corners of the earth." That the four cherubim represent the four Gospels is an idea, as Wordsworth well remarks, coming from the school of John, being found in Irenæus, the pupil of the pupil of John. It may be more than a coincidence that the Gospels are the creational number, *four*. But when writers have proceeded to assign either one of the four symbols to either one Gospel the want of individual resemblance has produced a variety of assignments. Irenæus makes the lion, John; the steer, Luke; the man, Matthew; and the eagle, Mark. Augustine makes the lion, Matthew; the man, Mark; the ox, Luke; and the eagle, John. We suppose that most modern critics would concede the eagle to the soaring John; to Luke, the broad, Pauline, humanitarian friend of the Gentiles, if not himself a Gentile, most would concede the **man**; to the concise and vigorous Mark, the lion; and to plain, substantial, ultra-Jewish Matthew, both the sturdiness and the sacrificial character of the ox.

8. **Six wings**—Like the seraphim of Isa. vi, 2; which with two of their wings covered the face in reverence before Jehovah; with two, their feet, as a decorum; and with the intermediate two they flew. John, however, makes no such distinction; the **six wings** apparently symbolize intense activity in obeying the behests of the Creator. **About him**—A period should be put after **wings**, closing the sentence. **Him** should be struck out, and the reading should be: *around and within* (the wings) **they** (the cherubim) **were full of eyes.** In verse 6, their bodies were described as **full of eyes before and behind.** Here they are described as to their **wings**; which **wings** were also **full of eyes**; both *around*, that is, on their outer side, and **within**, that is, on their inner side, coming in contact with the body when closed, and revealed to John's eye when expanded. So are these cherubim most swift, as is symbolized by their **six wings**; and most divinely perceptive, both in their nature, as symbolized by their many-eyed bodies, and in their activities, as symbolized by their many-eyed **wings.** These *living beings* represent, not merely the animal kingdom, but also the very structure of the earth, and all things known under physical philosophy. This is shown by their number **four,** which refers to the cardinal points, and so to the physical system. The term ζωον implies that the whole mundane system is, as Hengstenberg terms it, "*inspirited.*" The Spirit of God is the soul of nature. The whole is impregnate with his all-wise power, and is thereby enabled to move by the law of its true development. Each and every particle of matter thereby sees, with divine **eyes,** which way to move to incorporate itself into an organism; and so physiology and generative races are possi-

[1] they rest not day and night, saying, [t] Holy, holy, holy, [u] Lord God Almighty, [v] which was, and is, and is to come. **9** And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, [w] who liveth for ever and ever, **10** [x] The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, [y] and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, [z] and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, **11** [a] Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: [b] for thou hast created all things, and for

1 Greek, *they have no rest.*—*t* Isaiah 6. 3. —*u* Chapter 1. 8.—*v* Chapter 1. 4.—*w* Chapter 1. 18; 5. 14; 15. 7.—*x* Chapter 5. 8, 14.

y Verse 9.—*z* Verse 4.—*a* Chapter 5. 12 —*b* Genesis 1. 1; Acts 17. 24; Ephesians 3. 9; Colossians 1. 16: chapter 10. 6.

ble. Each chemical element sees how to act to carry out God's prescribed affinities, and with all its **six wings** hasten to be in exact time. And so it is that matter and motion, under rule of intelligence, form a systematic universe.

The *living beings* and **the elders** are here both present at the throne in this day of the divine *levee*, because the purpose of the day is to unfold the future of both the living world and the living Church. And to the eye and ear of faith, the creation and the Church are a perpetual choir, offering an endless anthem to the Creator. **They rest not**—A faulty translation, as suggesting weariness in the truly tireless. The literal Greek is, they *have no cessation*—no pause in their movements, no silence of their hymn. **Day** and **night** creation moves in rhythmic measures, and **day** and **night** the universal Church rolls up its *trisagion*. **Saying** — It may seem strange to some that it is not the Church, but creation, that first offers its praise to God. Not so thought the psalmist, (Psa. cxlv, 10,) "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee." There is a desperate pessimism at present infecting our age, which finds in creation no proof of the goodness of God. The blessed faith of our Bible teaches a more benign philosophy. It holds that this is, on the whole, the best possible system, and beholds the world rejoicing in its existence and blessing its Creator. The permission of moral evil, and the partial production of natural evil, are methods and means of producing a higher result than could have existed without them. **Holy, holy, holy** — This trine ascription (called the *trisagion*, or *thrice-holy*) is based on Isa. vi, 3, but carried out to a New Testament and trinitarian completeness. The trinality is emphasized by the thrice-three of the entire verse. Stuart remarks that he would not "rest" or "risk" a leading doctrine on this verse. But there is no "risk" in corroborating the proof of the trinity derived from a whole body of texts, making three a number for the divine by this, which is perhaps a crowning instance.

The word holy, thrice uttered, cannot well be applied to the three persons severally, as is shown by the fact that the second and third three in the verse cannot. It is the repetition of intensity. The divine holiness, omnipotence, and eternity, are sublimely recognised by the creational representatives.

9. **Glory and honour and thanks** —A threefold divine ascription.

10. **Fall down**—It is remarkable that all the Greek verbs of this verse are in the future tense, and should have been so rendered. The seer tells what will be according to divine rule. The verse reads like a rubric to the celestial liturgy. **Cast...crowns before... throne**—In token that they belonged to him who sat thereon, and are worn by themselves in fealty to him. This was the custom of petty kings toward their superior sovereigns. Thus, Tacitus tells us that Tiridates laid down his crown before the statue of Nero, in token that he held his throne in subjection to the emperor.

11. **Hast created**—As response to the creational representatives; it is the creation that the elders now celebrate. **For thy pleasure**—A decidedly incorrect translation. The Greek signifies, *on account of thy will.* The creation is the consequence of the divine

thy pleasure they are and were created.

volition. **They are**—They now exist. **Were created**—Were brought into existence at first. This verse is quoted in Dr. Hodge's Theology to prove that God's end in creation was solely his own good pleasure and glory. But, whether that doctrine is true or not, it is not contained in these words. The text only traces the creation to the divine volition, without explicitly declaring what was the end or motive of the volition. But the thanks rendered certainly imply that a moving influence was the divine goodness, and a moving end was the happiness of the created.

SCENERY AND SCOPE OF THE APOCALYPTIC VISION.—For a clear understanding of the movements of the book it is all important to keep in mind the following view of the visional world into which John now enters.

The door in heaven admits John into the symbolic **heaven,** or region and scene of Apocalyptic evolutions. The divine throne and state were on an ideal plain of vision from which a wide range on all sides can be seen. Above is the firmament, or firmamental **heaven,** in which the dragon is first seen, xii, 2; and from which the angel of chap. x, and Christ in xix, 11, descend; and a midheaven where the birds fly. See note xix, 17; viii, 13; xiv, 6. Above the firmament is the highest **heaven,** whence the New Jerusalem comes down, xxi, 2. Below, in more or less distant view, are the **earth** and **sea,** and even the crater of the **bottomless pit,** (ix, 1, xx, 3,) and lake of fire, xx, 10. Near at hand are Mount Zion, ix, 1, and the temple, ix, 10, with its **court,** *sanctuary,* and **altar,** 11. This divine throne in regal state maintains its permanent position through the whole Apocalypse. Even when the old heaven and earth disappear, and the **great white throne** of judgment (xx, 11) and the **new earth** appear, (xxi, 1,) this **throne** of Revelation remains in its moveless, ideal position. And St. John is supposed to stand permanently in its front, at due distance to command, with his observant eye, the whole scene. We imagine the throne to be in the Holy of Holies, yet so as to be usually unconcealed by curtain or wall from the seer's eye. But once does our seer leave the presence of the Apocalyptic throne; namely, when he visits the wilderness of the harlot, xvii. Perhaps, also, a second time, when he scales the top of a high mountain to survey the New Jerusalem, xxi, 10.

In the following passages John's symbolic or scenic **heaven** is meant: iv, 1, 2; viii, 1; xiv, 17; xv, 5; xvi, 17.

In the following, the astronomic, firmamental, or atmospheric **heaven:** v, 3, 13; vi, 13, 14; viii, 10; ix, 1; x, 1, 4, 5, 6, 8; xi, 6, 12, 13, 15, 19; xii, 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12; xiii, 6, 13; xv, 1; xvi, 11, 21; xviii, 1, 4, 5, 20; xix, 1, 11, 14, 17; xx, 1, 9, 11; xxi, 1. On this heaven, as a place of superhuman beings, see Eph. ii, 2; iv, 9, 10. Highest heavens, God's residence, xxi, 2, 3, 10. God's throne, xii, 5.

CHAPTER V.

AND I saw in the right hand of

CHAPTER V.

II. PRELUDE TO OPENING THE SEVEN SEALS, 1–14.

The Book and unaccepted challenge, 1–4.

1. **And**—In the fourth chapter we had St. John's gorgeous description of the royal-divine Court, convened to unfold the future of the Church and world. We are now to have the production of the document under whose **seals** the future is closed. **The right hand**—Made visible, though the divine Person is curtained in glory. **A book**—Let not the English reader fashion in his mind a modern bound **book,** but a manuscript *roll.* It is disputed among commentators, whether this *roll* is a single sheet or seven sheets, each with its seal. The old commentators, Grotius, Vitringa, Wetstein, Storr, Ewald, and others, said *seven;* Stuart, Elliott, and Alford, say *one.* These latter hold it to be a single sheet rolled up and fastened with seven seals. The old view, as Ewald's, is thus well given by Stuart: "Ewald objects to the idea

him that sat on the throne [a]a book written within and on the back side, [b]sealed with seven seals. **2** And I saw a [c]strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, [d]Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? **3** And no man [e]in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. **4** And I wept much, [f]because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

a Ezekiel 2. 9, 10. — *b* Isaiah 29. 11; Daniel 12. 4. — *c* Psalm 103. 20.

d Isaiah 29. 11, 12; 41. 22, 23. — *e* Verse 13. — *f* Daniel 12. 8, 9.

of a *scroll* or *roll* here, and maintains that there were seven separate *libelli* rolled in succession around a piece of wood in the centre, the first of which was the longest and the rest successively shorter; so that the seals on the margin of the outside leaf might be seen by John."

We here agree with the old interpreters. The obvious idea is, that as each successive seal was broken, a new leaf was unrolled, unfolding a new leaf of futurity. That futurity was thickly written over both pages of each leaf. It must have been, that of each single seal the entire matter was written on each side, so requiring a single piece for its own record. And the symbol that came forth was *the concentrated embodiment of the thoughts of its written record.* Why should there be seven seals on a single sheet? The seals were seven, in order to close down the seven leaves. Stuart asks, What is the significance, then, of the **written within and on the back side?** Just the same, we say, with seven as with one. In both cases the inside writing would, when rolled up, be concealed under the seals, and in both cases the outside writing would alone be visible, and the inside writing be inferred until seen. Stuart's remark that the old view implies "seven rolls," ignores the fact that a whole volume, even the entire pentateuch, is called a *roll.* **Within and... back side**—Implies that the matter was so copious, that both pages of the leaf, inside and outside, were written. **Seven seals**—Signs of both divine authentication and divine secrecy. The sheets were so rolled on to a cylinder that each later sheet left an uncovered margin upon which the seal was stamped.

2. **Strong angel**—Personal physical vigour is implied in the word **strong,** as in x, 1; xviii, 21. The present angel is **strong,** as being herald and challenger for God. Who is competent to break the seals that Jehovah has stamped? Who may reveal the secrets of the future, "which the Father has reserved in his own power?" Acts i, 7. Düsterdieck's statement, that as the seven trumpets spring from the seventh seal, and the seven vials from the seventh trumpet, so the Apocalyptic revelation is at first all enclosed in the seals, is nearly true. But the sixth chapter is not in the real series, but a contrastive picture without, and over against, the seals. And as this **strong angel** is without the real series, so the parallel **strong angel** of chapter x is outside the series, both being one of the personal managers of the panorama. And as the challenging question of this verse dimly suggests Michael, so Gabriel seems suggested by x, 1; where see note. **A loud voice**—Which (next verse) was so **loud** and **strong** as to peal through **heaven** and **earth. Who is**—This may be an allusion to the name *Michael,* which signifies, Who is like God? **Worthy**—If force could have torn up the divine **seals,** the **strong angel** who issues the challenge might, perhaps, have accepted the task. It was, however, the highest *worthiness,* desert, dignity, alone which could presume to open the divine seals of futurity.

3. **No man**—The word **man** is not in the Greek, and is a most unauthorized limitation. **No** *one,* whether **man,** spirit, demon, angel, or archangel, in **heaven, earth,** or **under the earth,** dared answer the all-pervading **voice. Neither to look thereon**—That is, to inspect its rolled-up pages.

4. **I**—Emphatic. *My* response was weeping; the sole echo in the univer-

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, [g] the Lion of the tribe of Judah, [h] the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, [i] and to loose the seven seals thereof. 6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood [k] a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and [l] seven eyes, which are [m] the seven spirits of God sent

[g] Gen. 49. 9, 10; Heb. 7. 14.—[h] Isa. 11. 1, 10; Rom. 15. 12; chap. 22. 16.—[i] Ver. 1; chap. 6. 1.

[k] Isa. 53. 7; John 1. 29, 36; 1 Pet. 1. 19; chap. 13. 8; ver. 9, 12.—[l] Zech. 3. 9; 4. 10.—[m] Chap. 4. 5.

sal silence—the silence of despair to the Church, for the revelation of her future, which was to have been her guiding star, is now forever shut up for want of a solver of the **seals.**

Challenge accepted and the Book taken by the Lamb, 5-7.

5. **One of the elders**—The **Lamb,** as the next verse shows, had not yet been made visible to the seer; but one of the elders—exalted representative of the Church within the circle of the sacred twenty-four—is in the divine secret. The elder in his throned and crowned state is more knowing than the apostle still in the flesh. There is one, he declares, who in spite of all this silence, not only *will* prevail, but **hath prevailed to open and loose book and seals. Lion.. Judah**—Judah, that is the *tribe*, which according to the patriarchal prophecy (Gen. xlix, 9) was to be a "lion;" and this is the **lion** of the "lion," in whom all the *lion* in the tribe rises into completion. And as **lion** is a warlike image, so **hath prevailed,** is military: literally, *hath conquered*, to break the seals. The *battle* of revelation is identical with the battle of redemption. The fixedness of the seals consists in the natural impossibility of knowing the far future. The same agony by which the **Lamb** overcame the moral impossibility of saving the lost sinner, conquers the natural impossibility of revealing the last days to the saved Church. And this serves to help us to understand the depth in John's weeping; somehow he identified the revelation of the future of the Church with its true redemption, and auspicated that in losing one he might lose both. The mighty **Lion** proved able to save both, and forthwith John was strong in his strength. **Root of David**—Not **the root** from which David sprung; but the **root-sprout** which germinates from David and culminates in Messiah.

6. **Beheld, and lo**—For the first time the **Lamb** dawns on the seer's sight in the midst of the celestial group. He is at once **Lion** and **Lamb.** The repetition of the phrase **in the midst,** is a Hebraism, which obscures the sense of the English, in which it should be used but once. The **Lamb** stood centrally in the group of cherubim and elders, either between the **sea** and the **lamps** or outside the **lamps.** Hengstenberg emphasizes too strongly the fact that the Greek word for lamb is *ἀρνίον, arnion*, a diminutive, *little lamb*, a *lambkin.* But it does not appear that St. John's grammatical diminutives ending in *on*, denote a diminutive object. Thus the diminutive *βιβλίον, biblion*, does not signify a *little roll*, but has a diminutive *βιβλαρίδιον, biblaridion*, (ch. x, 2,) which does. The diminutive *θηρίον, therion*, signifies a great beast. And this uniform use of this sort of diminutive seems, also, to invalidate Wordsworth's ingenious idea, that St. John uses the forms *ἀρνίον* and *θηρίον* to mark an antithesis. This word for lamb is used by John in the Apocalypse twenty-seven times, and in his Gospel (xxi, 15) once, and occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. **As it had been slain**—By being the **slain Lamb** he had become the conquering **Lion.** St. John recognised the **slain Lamb** by his wounded side and hands, just as Thomas did after the resurrection. **Seven horns**—An undoubted antithesis to the **seven horns** of the dragon and of the beast, but without any reference here to the seven hills of Rome. As **horns** are, in biblical language, a symbol of power, they tell us that this **slain Lamb** is a mighty

forth into all the earth. **7** And he came and took the book out of the right hand [o] of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, [p] the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them [p] harps, and golden vials full of [1] odours, [q] which are the prayers

n Chap. 4. 2.—*o* Chap. 4. 8, 10.—*p* Chap 14. 2; 15. 2.—1 Or, *incense.*—*q* Psa. 141. 2; ch. 8. 3, 4.

Being. The number marks divine perfection of power, as those of the dragon mark diabolic supremacy of power. The **seven spirits of God,** represented by the **seven eyes,** denote the all-pervasive, all-searching Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, dwelling in, and proceeding from, the Son. Their sevenfoldness are their perfect manifestation in manifold modes, and arise from their unity in him; just as the four winds are one atmosphere, one universal air. **Sent forth** — The spiritual Apostle (apostle signifies **sent**) **sent forth,** not only with every true apostle, but to many a clime and many a soul no apostle ever reached. The imagery is borrowed from Zech. iv, 10.

7. **Took the book**—Stuart, after Vitringa, and more persistently, raises the question, How could the **Lamb** take the roll without hands? And this question, Düsterdieck rejects as "*unnothig und geschmacklos,*" *needless and tasteless.* But Ezekiel did not think it *geschmacklos* to tell us that his cherubim "had the hands of a man," Ezek. i. 8. And the query of Stuart raises the question, What was the real form of the **Lamb?** and that is quite as legitimate as the question, What were the forms of the cherubim? which is much discussed by these critics. Alford argues that the cherubim were in human form, because they fall down in worship; and it seems as legitimate for us to argue that the **Lamb** could not have held a quadruped form in sitting on his "throne." Stuart well discusses this perfectly necessary and æsthetic question. He rather favours the idea that the **Lamb,** at the first view of the seer, wore the quadruped form, but with the transformability of a dream-image, gradually changed to the form of the "Son of man," as he approached to take the roll. Or, we may suppose that with visional liberty the two forms of lamb and man transparently enfolded and enclosed one the other, (as amber may enclose a diamond,) so as both to be recognisable by the seer's eye. Nevertheless we rather prefer Stuart's view; and holding the form of the **Lamb** with seven horns to be a transient symbol to the seer's eye, we do not *think it* in connexion with the word Lamb as used in the rest of John's twenty-seven instances.

Successive songs of praise to the Lamb, 8-14.

8. **When he had taken**—Greek aorist, **when he** *took,* making the triumphal chant of the cherubic **beasts and the elders** in instantaneous consequence. **The four,** as nearer the throne, and as creation is antecedent to the Church, precede in the act of grateful adoration. This remarkable prostration is **before the Lamb**—an unquestionable divine honour. **Having**—Probably referring to the **elders** alone; for, 1. The word would not well, grammatically, in the Greek, refer to **beasts;** 2. The words **hast redeemed** could hardly include the representatives of the creation; and 3. The part of the **beasts** seems to have been the final responsive **Amen** of verse 14. **Harps** — The κιθάρα, (*cithara,* whence our *guitar,*) the Septuagint name for David's *harp,* is described by Josephus as fitted with ten strings, and when played was usually struck with a plectrum or key: yet it is described in the Psalms as struck by David with the fingers. Probably both modes were used. **Golden vials**—Rather, *saucers.* They were the *censers,* or broad shallow bowls, exposing as much surface as practicable from which to roll up the incense. **Odours**—Incenses. For the composition of the *incense,* see note on Heb. ix, 14. **Which are**—That is, *represent.* **The prayers**—The censer, with its glow-

of saints. **9** And [r] they sung a new song, saying, [s] Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: [t] for thou wast slain, and [u] hast redeemed us to God by thy blood [v] out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; **10** [w] And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. **11** And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels [x] round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was [y] ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

[r] Psa. 40. 3; chap. 14. 3. — [s] Chap. 4. 11. — [t] Ver. 6. — [u] Acts 20. 28; Rom. 3. 24; 1 Cor. 6. 20; 7. 23; Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14; Heb. 9. 12; 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19; 2 Pet. 2. 1; 1 John 1. 7; chap. 14. 4.

[v] Dan. 4. 1; 6. 25; chap. 7. 9; 11. 9; 14. 6. — [w] Exod. 19. 6; 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9; chap. 1. 6; 20. 6; 22. 5. — [x] Chap. 4. 4, 6. — [y] Psa. 68. 17; Dan. 7. 10; Heb. 12. 22.

ing ingredients, represents the human heart with its devout emotions, and the rise of the fragrant incense represents the ascent of acceptable **prayers.**

9. **New song**—As demanded by a **new** occasion. All the old melodies suited their occasion; but this event demands a fresh composition, fresh words, and fresh melody. **Hast redeemed**—Rather, Greek aorist, *didst redeem*, namely, at the crucifixion. **Us** is rejected by the best authorities, and so **redeemed** is without an expressed objective. So, also, the **us** of verse 10 should, according to the best authorities, be *them*, thereby showing that the implied objective here should also be third person *them*. So, also, **we** in verse 10, should be *they*. The **song** does not express explicitly the thought that themselves had been **redeemed** and should **reign.** And this avoidance, perhaps, may imply that the cherubic **beasts** took share in the **song,** and thus necessitated the third person, since the earth was not **redeemed,** and could not **reign. By thy blood**—Deeply emphatic. Not by example or teaching of the Lamb were they **redeemed,** but also **by blood. Kindred . . . nations** — The earth-wide *four*. The limitation **out of** seems to imply that the redemption did not take effect with the entire race. All are not saved by it.

10. **Hast made** — Rather, *didst make;* coordinate with *didst redeem*, in verse 9. **Us**—*Them*, as said in our note on verse 9. **Kings and priests** —The true reading seems to be, *Thou didst make them, unto God, a kingdom*, instead of **kings and priests. We shall reign** should read, **and** *they* **reign on the earth.** Not that **we shall reign,** in the future, but *they*, the redeemed, do now **reign on earth.**

The important changes made by textual criticisms in this **song,** suggest its reproduction thus:—Thou art worthy to take the roll, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and didst redeem to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. And didst make them unto our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign on earth.

These changes are important, as showing that the *kingdom* and the **reign** of the saints on earth are truly now already begun and existing, and waiting future enlargments, confirmations, and developments.

To this song of the cherubic **beasts** and the **elders,** there now comes, by a sublime surprise, a reenforcement of an innumerable company of angels. It begins to dawn upon us that we have at this great hour a fivefold **song.** It begins, *first*, with the *trisagion*, iv, 8, by the cherubim, which, *second*, is responded to by the elders. *Third*, the elders have just now celebrated the opening of the roll; and, *fourth*, peals the angelic anthem, and their peal wakens every creature in all parts of creation to a *fifth* and last reverberation.

11. **I beheld . . . heard**—In larger circle, around the circle of the elders, there now beams upon the eye an overwhelming assemblage of angels, pouring their song upon the ear of our apostle. They are now for the first time, and but transiently, visible. **The number of them was,** in the Greek, *myriads of myriads and chiliads*

12 Saying with a loud voice, [a]Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. **13** And [a]every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, [b]Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him [c]that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. **14** [d]And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him [e]that liveth for ever and ever.

[a] Ch 4. 11.——[a] Phil. 2. 10; verse 3.——[b] 1 Chron. 29. 11; Rom. 9. 5; 16. 27; 1 Tim. 6. 16; 1 Pet. 4. 11; 5. 11; chap. 1. 6.——[c] Chap. 6. 16; 7. 10.——[d] Chap. 19. 4.——[e] Chap. 4. 9, 10.——[a] Chap. 5. 5-7.

CHAPTER VI.

AND [a]I saw when the Lamb

of chiliads, the sonorousness of which is still more sonorous in our English translation, the billowy roll of which is most magnificent. The Septuagint of Dan. vii, 10 reads, "Thousand of thousands ministered unto him, and myriads of myriads stood before him," giving by climax the greater number last. John gives the lesser number last, as if not satisfied with the greater number alone without a supplement.

12. The angels furnish their sevenfold ascription to **the Lamb**; such ascription as Scripture never makes to angels.

13. **Every creature** — "By the very terms," Alford well says, "animated creature; for heaven, earth, and sea themselves are mentioned as the abodes of these *creatures*." And the threefoldness of these abodes is clear, notwithstanding the distinctions of **on** and **under** the surface of **earth** and **sea**. **In the sea**—Rather *on*, referring to surface marine animals, and distinction from **in** in the following **clause**. **All that are in** (as well as **on** and **under**) **them**, that is, **in** the **earth** and **sea**. This wide creational song ascribes to God the creational *four* things.

14. The fivefold *songs* are ended, and it comes back to the standing fixtures; namely, the cherubic **beasts** and the elders, to confirm and ratify the utterances; the former by their **amen**, and the latter by their profound adoration of the Eternal.

On these two chapters we may note, that the theophany and the celestial rejoicing at the possibility of opening the seals imply a stupendous value in the revelations about to be made in the coming apocalypse. No book in the Bible has so magnificent an introduction, with such an assumption of the value of its own contents. However little some Christian periods or Christian thinkers may value this apocalypse, it sets a stupendous valuation upon itself. Its opening is occasion for glorious hymns to the opener. The burden of the hymns, indeed, is the great atonement by his sacrificial death; but this revelation is here a leading part of the results of that atonement. The same, indeed, is true of the entire New Testament canon—that the revelation of gospel truth results from the atonement; but this apocalypse, as crowning close of that canon, and standing prophecy for the Christian Church. This view may seem to justify the terrible warning against all mutilation or corruption in xxii, 18, 19, and may suggest how, in speaking for the apocalypse, it speaks for the whole canon. Note on xxii, 6.

CHAPTER VI.

III. Opening of the Seven Seals, vi, 1–viii, 1.

Four Creational Seals, 1-8.

1. **And**—By decision of the devine court the seals are now, through the agency of the Lamb, about to be broken. And in each of the three series of sevens, the *seals*, the *trumpets*, and the *vials*—the distinction between the creational *four* and the divine *three* is decisively marked; so decisively, indeed, as to be an important aid in the interpretation.

The first *four* of each *seven* have to do with external nature; and they so correspond with each other as to show that

opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, [b] one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. **2** And I saw, and behold [c] a white horse: [d] and he that sat on him had a bow; [e] and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

[b] Chapter 4. 7. — [c] Zechariah 6. 3; chapter 19. 11.

[d] Psalm 45. 4, 5, Sept. — [e] Zech. 6. 11; chapter 14. 14.

not so much chronological order, as mutual correlation, is the basis of their succession. This fact discards fatally those methods of interpretation according to which a long consecutive human history, with dates in chronological order, is here sought to be traced. The last *three* of each seven have to do with more spiritual interests dear to the hearts of **the elders**—with men rather than physical nature, and with the Church. The *six seals*, nevertheless, run through a series of successive phases of the entire moral history of the world under the Messianic dispensation. The first four present the world under the aspect of the *fall* of man; the second, the *renovation* through the final doom and retribution; which is completed in the picture of the redemption and the glory in chapter vii. We have thus in the six seals the cycle of man's moral history briefly symbolized, to be more fully evolved under the seven trumpets. The *unsealing* of chapter vi is a dark and gloomy series, which is gloriously relieved by the pictorial *sealing* of chap. vii. Hence *chapters sixth and seventh should be read as one great antithetic tableau.* It is the great judgment history and contrast; woe to the profane, grace to the holy. However much the Church has misread the Apocalypse, it has ever read this great assuring fact, that with God the finality will be the eternal triumph of the right. **The Lamb opened**—So that of this second apocalypse, which draws forth the third, as well as of the first, Christ is the real revealer. **One of the four beasts** — Each of the four creational seals is called forth by one of the cherubic **beasts. Noise** (rather, *voice*) **of thunder** — The movement of this great first unsealing thus signally announced. **Come and see** — Each of the four beasts utters a **Come,** and our English version adds, **and see,** as addressed to John. But the best authorities have only **Come.** To whom, then, was this **Come** addressed? Not to John, for the symbol was plainly visible to him without any *coming.* Clearly it is addressed to the symbol now to be released from detention by the opening of the seal, and ready to be *called forth* by the cherub. The fancy of Alford, that it is addressed to Jesus, (as in xxii, 20,) is very far-fetched.

The first seal—of CONQUEST.

2. **Behold**—As each **seal** is opened, the symbol does not remain as a picture on the visible page, but with a visional freedom springs forth a living, moving object, or series of objects. **A white horse**—The **white horse** was, in antiquity, a symbol of victory. The conqueror, in triumphal processions, rode on a white horse. And hence the Messiah, in xix, 11, rides a "white horse." From this fact many commentators identify the two, and interpret this symbol as the going forth of **a conquering** gospel. Such a meaning would not allow it to coordinate with the rest of the four, which are all symbols of earthly woe. It would stand alone among all the first four symbols of the entire three serial sevens. Hengstenberg, indeed, replies, that Christ's going forth would coordinate, because it is a judgment on the profane. But, 1. Hengstenberg emphasizes too strongly the phase of *judgment*, both in the theophany and this first four seals; and, 2. It would be equally true of the three spiritual seals that they are adverse, and even *judgment*, for the wicked. **Crown**—Not so much the diadem of royalty as the chaplet of victory. **Was given unto him**—By the force of events under divine permission. Similarly to the **red horse** of verse 4, and the **pale horse** of verse 8, **power was given. Conquering** — Now. **And**

3 And when he had opened the second seal, [f]I heard the second beast say, Come and see. **4** [g]And there went out another horse *that was* red: and [h]*power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, [i]I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo [k]a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. **6** And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, [1]A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and [1]*see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, [m]I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. **8** [n]And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him. And power was given [2]unto them over the fourth part of the earth, [o]to kill with sword, and with hunger, and

f Chapter 4. 7. — *g* Zechariah 1. 8; 6. 2. — *h* Exodus 9. 16, 17; Isaiah 37. 26, 27. — *i* Chapter 4. 7. — *k* Zechariah 6. 2.

1 Greek, *choenix*, a measure containing nearly a quart. — *l* Chap. 9. 4. — *m* Chap. 4. 7. — *n* Zech. 6. 3. — 2 Or, *to him*. — *o* Ezek. 14. 21.

to conquer—In the future. Present success is stimulant and surety for a full career of success. This well describes the progress of a Charlemagne or a Napoleon.

Second seal—of CARNAGE, *attendant upon conquest*, 3, 4.

4. **Red**—Etymologically, the word signifies *fire-red*, but by use it often signifies *blood-red*. **Take peace from the earth**—Not that the entire earth should be at war at once, but through the centuries, and through the earth, the blood-demon should roam, destroying the peace of the world.

Third seal—of SCARCITY, 5, 6.

5. **Black horse**—Emblem of want of light, midnight, adversity. **Pair of balances**—Or scales. Emblem, not of absolute *famine*, but of "hard times;" of scarcity of provisions, when every thing is strictly weighed or measured.

6. **Voice in the midst...beasts**—Stuart infers unwisely that this **voice** came from God, whose throne was **in the midst of the four.** It would be a strange communication for the divine **voice.** Rather we think it the common **voice** of the suffering world, represented by the **four,** addressed to the rider of the **black horse,** and cautioning him to exact no higher price, and not to **hurt** the oil and wine crops. **A penny,** according to Matt. xx, 2, 9, was price of a day's labour, and a penny would now buy one measure or *choenix* of wheat, nearly equal to one quart of our measure, or three *choenixes* of **barley.** This would probably be very tight living, but we know how prices advance in times of scarcity. The preservation of oil and wine indicates some mitigation of the scarcity, as these, though much used as aliment, were nevertheless rather luxuries.

Fourth seal—of *fourfold* DEATH, 7, 8.

8. **A pale horse**—Literally, *a green* **horse**; or, as Alford, "when used of flesh implies that greenish pallor which we know as *livid;* the colour of the corpse in incipient decay, or of the complexion extremely pale through disease." **Death,** as riding the horse, was, of course, beheld as a personal being. **Hell,** *hades*, is supposed by Stuart to be personified here as well as in xx, 14. It certainly is personified in 1 Cor. xv, 55. But that it is in either case so fully personified as to be shaped into form and figure we doubt. We rather conceive *hades*, here, to be a shadowy vague, a moving nebulous region, a ghostly receptacle for the souls of men slain by **death,** and for that purpose *following* in his track. **Fourth part**—A limitation divine in its origin, (as indicated by **given** in previous clause,) yet expressed by the creational **fourth** as being wrought through creational or secondary causations. Notes on ix, 5, 15. **To kill with**—The creational *four.* **Hunger**—Unlike the third symbol, this is deadly famine. **With death**

with death, [p] and with the beasts of the earth.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under [q] the altar [r] the souls of them that were slain [s] for the word of God, and for [t] the testimony which they held: **10** And they cried with a loud voice, saying, [u] How long, O Lord, [v] holy and true, [w] dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

[p] Lev. 26. 22.——[q] Chap. 8. 3; 9. 13; 14. 18.——[r] Chap. 20. 4.——[s] Chap. 1. 9.

[t] 2 Tim. 1. 8; chap. 12. 17; 19. 10.——[u] Zech. 1. 12.——[v] Chap. 3. 7.——[w] Chap. 11. 18; 19. 2.

—Grotius says, "By the term **death**, here, according to a Hebraism, we are to understand *pestilence*. For so **death** is taken in Jer. ix, 21 and xviii, 21. So, in the Son of Sirach we read, (xxxix, 29,) 'pestilence and death,' where death undoubtedly signifies pestilence. The Syriac, also, as well here as on Luke, renders the Greek word for pestilence by the Hebrew death; and the Septuagint, as well as the Chaldaic and Latin, translate the Hebrew for pestilence by death." In Ezekiel xiv, 21, God says, "I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem —the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the *pestilence*."

In conclusion, upon the four creational symbols we may note, that while there is nothing chronological, yet the last three are the ordinary sequents of the first; that is, from conquest result carnage, scarcity, and the fourfold destructions above mentioned.

Three Spiritual Seals, 9-viii, 6.

Fifth seal—Cry from souls under the altar=PERSECUTION, 9–11.

The four creational seals are past. We have henceforward no **Come** of the **beasts,** no symbolic horses, no further secular and earthly troubles. We now rise into a more spiritual region. And the vision represents its meaning less by symbol and more by definite picture. The martyrs, the dissolution of the probationary system, and the passage to the next series of revelation, are revealed by the remaining three seals.

9. **Under the altar**—The altar of the temple in xi, 1, namely, of the scenic earthly Jerusalem. Note iv, 11. It is not the altar of incense, but the grand altar of sacrifice. The law was, The whole blood of the bullock shall be poured at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering, which is before the tabernacle of the congregation. Lev. iv, 7. And as the blood is the animal soul or life, so symbolically the **souls** of those who had been sacrificed for their faith are represented as lying below the altar, and crying to God for retribution. Not that the blood symbolizes **souls,** but the **souls** themselves are seen, shadowy forms, by the seer's spiritual eye. Hengstenberg maintains that **souls** here means, not the disembodied spirits of the martyrs, but their blood, which cries for vengeance, poetically, like the blood of Abel. But how could blood speak of avenging **our blood?** Hengstenberg's evasion, that it is the **slain** who thus speak, is inadmissible. Where were the **slain,** as seen by John, crying, if they were not **the souls?** Alford and Elliott both interpret this of really disembodied souls whose condition symbolizes the repression of the cause of Christ under power of antichrist. And yet, in Rev. xx, 4, where these same **souls** reappear to reign, as symbol of the triumph of Christ over antichrist, these interpreters maintain the souls of the beheaded martyrs to be their bodies!

10. **How long**—Of course there was no *literal* utterance by martyred **souls** of these words. It is a dramatic form of expressing the profound thought that murdered innocence has a claim on the divine justice for timely retribution. The words are an inspired assurance that Jehovah holds himself bound to be not only **holy and true,** but retributively just. And this is strikingly recognised by Jesus himself in the parable of the unjust judge, and his closing words, so wonderfully like the present passage: "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Luke xviii, 7, 8, where see our notes. **Judge**

11 And [x] white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, [y] that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, [z] and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and [a] the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; **13** [b] And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her [3] untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind; **14** [c] And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled

x Ch. 3. 4, 5; 7. 9, 14.—y Heb. 11. 40; ch. 14. 13.—z Chap. 16. 18.—a Joel 2. 10. 31; 3. 15; Matt. 24. 29; Acts 2. 20.—b Chap. 8. 10; 9. 1.—3 Or, *green figs*.—c Psa. 102. 26; Isa. 34. 4; Heb. 1. 12.

-- An appeal for either temporal retribution or for a speedy final judgment throne. **Them that dwell on the earth**—The profane world; omitting all mention of the few saintly exceptions. So our Lord: "Ye shall be hated of *all nations* for my name's sake." Matt. xxiv, 9.

11. **White robes**—Best reading, *A white robe* was given to them each. "The white robe in this book," says Alford, "is the vestment of acknowledged and glorified righteousness in which the saints reign with Christ. Compare iii, 4; xvii, 13." Note iii, 4. Neither this condition of the saints beneath the altar, nor this now first given robe, is so literal that we may suppose such humiliation and re-dressing to be actually undergone by glorified saints. Both the humiliation and re-dressing are symbol in action; the robes being really not bestowed until the disembodied saint first enters paradise. **It was said unto them**—By divine authority, but by unknown speakers. Note on i, 10. **Should rest**—Should wait in repose and full assurance of ultimate justice. **For a little season**—As reckoned by God's chronology. Note 2 Pet. iii, 10. **Fellow servants**—The entire body of the elect. **Brethren... killed**—The glorious army of martyrs. **Be fulfilled**—Rather, **should** *fulfil*, that is, their career; and all gather in at the final glorious resurrection.

Sixth seal—Final earthly DISSOLUTION AND DOOM, 12–17.

12. **And**—"The interpretation of the sixth seal," says Alford truly, "is a crucial point in apocalyptic exegesis. We may unhesitatingly set down all interpretations as wrong which view as the fulfilment of this passage any period except the coming of the Lord." The parallel passages are Matt. xxiv, 29–35, and xxv, 31–46. Hengstenberg's objection, that the resurrection and other things are omitted, is equally true of both these passages. No one picture in Scripture of the final day is complete. The completion must be attained by a blending of cognate passages. **A great earthquake**—The Greek word for **earthquake** does not limit the **quake** to the **earth,** but implies a *concussion* which, as here, may include *heaven* as well as **earth. Sun ...moon**—On their obscuration by the atmospheric commotions of the day of dissolution, see our note on Matt. xxiv, 29. **Black as sackcloth**—The *cilicium*, on which see note, Acts xviii, 3.

13. **Stars of heaven fell**—On the *optical* falling of the stars by the commotions of the earth and heaven see our note on "the stars shall fall from heaven." Matt. xxiv, 29. **Untimely figs**—Winter **figs,** which usually drop off in spring. **Shaken of a mighty wind**—A vivid figure of the rush of divine power sweeping the earth in the day of doom.

14. **Heaven departed as a scroll**—Compare our notes on the passing "away with a great noise," of 2 Peter iii, 10; and also on "the earth and the heaven fled away," of Rev. xx, 11. These parallels prove the identity of this dissolution with that of those two passages, as well as with that of Matt xxiv, 29. This identity of the three is conclusive against a pre-millennial advent. **A scroll**—A sheet of parchment, papyrus, or paper, loosely crumpled and vanishing away. To the eye of the spectator, in this scene of rocking terrene convulsion, the apparent sky

together; and every mountain and island [d] were moved out of their places. **15** And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, [e] hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; **16** [f] And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: **17** [g] For the great day of his wrath is come; [h] and who shall be able to stand?

[d] Jer. 3. 23; 4. 24; chap. 16. 20.—[e] Josh. 10. 16, 17; Judges 6. 2; Isa. 2. 19.—[f] Hos. 10. 8; Luke 23. 30; chap. 9. 6.—[g] Isa. 13. 6, &c.; Zeph. 1. 14, &c.; chap. 16. 14.—[h] Psa. 76. 7.

CHAPTER VII.

AND after these things I saw

of clouds and firmament will seem to crumple and rush away. **Mountain ...island...moved**—As seen from a bird's-eye view, the prominent geographical points will appear to change their places.

15. Beginning with **kings**, and courtiers, and millionaires, and descending through all ranks, even to the slaves, our seer pictures the terror of all the profane race. His crown cannot save the king or emperor; the profane **great men**, whether railway kings, or statesmen, or philosophers, or literati, alike tremble. **Rich men**—Whether profane merchant princes, or bank presidents, or stock gamblers, are unable to buy salvation at any price. **Chief captains**—Profane military conquerors, great generals, heroic admirals and commodores, are all alike cowards before **the wrath of the Lamb. Hid themselves**—In the yawning **dens** and under the projecting **rocks** produced by the convulsions, they vainly seek protection from Him who convulses.

16. **Fall on us**—Begging the boon of death to escape a doom worse than death. Says Stuart: "In like manner Pliny represents some fugitives from the fiery shower of Vesuvius as praying for death that they might escape the igneous deluge of the mountain: Erant qui metu mortis mortem precaventur—*some, through fear of death, begged for death.*" (Epis. vi, 20.) The wish expressed in the text may be further illustrated by a reference to the very common cases of suicide in prisons, when persons are under sentence of death, or expect it with certainty. They thus escape a more horrible death, and, in their apprehension, a more disgraceful one, by an exit which is less appalling. Note on ix, 6. **Sitteth on the throne**—Not the apocalyptic symbol **throne** of iv, 1, but the judgment **throne** of xx, 11. **Wrath of the Lamb**—The wrath of him on the throne is the wrath of rectoral justice; **the wrath of the Lamb** is the still more terrible wrath of abused grace and mercy. No vengeance so awful as divine love transformed to divine **wrath.**

17. **The great day of his wrath**—Can be no other than God's **day** of judgment doom. **Who**—Of the trembling profane world. **To stand**—To meet the decision of the judge, without falling into the pit of the second death.

CHAPTER VII.

Counter picture of celestial reward of Saints, 1-17.

a. *Winds are silenced, while* OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS *are sealed*, 144,000, 1-8.

1. **And**—The six seals of chap. vi give the shady side of human history and destiny; this chapter gives the sunny side. During that darksome history there was a Church, sometimes struggling and sometimes triumphant, in the world. And now, to relieve the scene and to exhilarate the Christian heart, a picture of that Church is contrastively spread before us in its glory. It follows, that the complete history of the world is not profane and inglorious, nor a defeat of Christ's atonement and headship of the race. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

The angel of the seals bids the an-

four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, [a] holding the four winds of the earth, [b] that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. **2** And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the [c] seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four

[a] Dan. 7. 2.—[b] Chap. 9. 4.—[c] John 6. 27; 2 Cor. 1. 22; Eph. 1. 13; 2 Tim. 2. 19.—[d] Chap. 6. 6; 9. 4.

gels of the winds to hush every breeze while he stamps **the servants of God**, 1–3. One hundred and forty-four thousand are sealed from among the twelve tribes of Israel, 4–8. Then the great innumerable body redeemed from among all nations are seen standing before the theophanic throne, (amid a choir of angels circling around them,) and their paradisaic state is explained by one of the elders, 9–17.

It is a great question among commentators, who are the 144,000? and who the **great multitude** of verse 9? By our mode of interpretation, the reply seems clear and simple. They are, as may be fully shown in our notes, the Old Testament and the New Testament Church; and their redemption is here pictorially presented in contrast to the condemnation of the profane world, as presented in the six seals of the last chapter.

After these things—This contrasted half does not belong to the seal series, but is a contrastive counterpart. **Four angels**—The creational number, indicating that they are a regular part of the system. In religious allegory they are nature-angels; in science they are the laws of nature; in truth they are the goings forth of the divine power in its established and regular methods. **Four corners**—Phraseology based upon the four points of the compass. **Not blow**—A divine quietude of the elements over **earth**, and **sea**, and **tree**, must await the sacred sealing process. All nature yields before the dispensations of heavenly grace.

2. **Another angel**—Not, as Hengstenberg, the Lord Jesus Christ in person, but the impersonation of his

angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, **3** Saying, [d] Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have [e] sealed the servants of our God [f] in their foreheads. **4** [g] And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were* sealed [h] a hundred *and* forty *and* four thou-

[e] Ezek. 9. 4; chapter 14. 1.—[f] Chapter 22. 4.—[g] Chapter 9. 16.—[h] Chapter 14. 1.

redeeming and authenticating power. **Ascending from the east**—Literal Greek, *from the rising of the sun.* This quarter is designated as the source of redeeming light and glory. Notes on chap. xvi and Luke i, 78. So Mal. iii, 20: "To you that fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing [salvation] in his wings." **Ascending**—As if coming from a fountain of divine splendour at or beneath the horizon. **Seal**—The purpose of a **seal** is first to secure a thing, as the closure of the door of Christ's sepulchre; and second, to authenticate a thing as truly belonging to the sealer. So, a seal is affixed to a signature to indicate that it is the signer's own signature, deliberately made. The justified soul is *sealed* at his justification; his name being written then in the book of life, and the adoption into the sonship of God being bestowed. This **seal** may be forfeited by apostasy, as said in Eph. iv, 30, where see note.

4. **And I heard the number**—Omitting the element of *time*, the present verse assumes the sealing as all done and the number reported. The whole number, not including the **great multitude** of verse 9; but the number of the sealed **of all the tribes of... Israel** is alone given. **A hundred and forty and four thousand**—A decisive instance of an exact for an inexact number, and decisive proof that there are symbol-numbers as well as symbol-objects. The basis is the symbol tribal-number, **twelve**; it is squared and multiplied by the cube of the number of universality, ten. It is, therefore, the churchly number, raised by multiplication of itself to a seemly

sand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. **5** Of the tribe of Judah *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand. **6** Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasseh *were* sealed twelve thousand. **7** Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand. **8** Of the tribe of Zebulun *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand. **9** After this *I* beheld, and, lo, [i] a great multitude, which no man could number, [k] of all nations, and kindreds, and

i Romans 11. 25.

k Chapter 5. 9.

magnitude, with the decimal symbolizing the inclusion of an immense whole. See notes on ix, 16; xi, 13; xx, 4.

5–8. **Of...tribe**—Wordsworth gives a table of the six catalogues of the twelve tribes in scripture. 1. The births of the twelve patriarchs, Gen. xxix, 32; xxx, 1–24; xxxv, 16–20. 2. In the blessing of Jacob, Gen. xlix, 1–29. 3. The list of Exodus i. 4. The order of the twelve standards at the tabernacle, Num. ii. 5. Order of tribal inheritance; and 6. The present list in the order of sealing.

Here, 1. Judah, as the tribe of the Messiah, stands first, in place of Reuben, first in all other lists, as being the firstborn. 2. For ethical reasons, the idolatrous tribes of Ephraim and Dan are excluded. Their place is filled by Levi and Joseph; Levi having been, as the uninheriting priestly tribe, omitted from the distribution of tribal territory, and Joseph having been omitted as being represented by his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. 3. The order of birth and the division of names according to the concubine and legitimate mothers, is disregarded. These changes arise from the new view introduced by the gospel.

b. *The number of* NEW TESTAMENT SAINTS *too great to be numbered; with song*, 9, 10.

9. **A great multitude**—The question is debated, what do the above **twelve tribes** and this **great multitude** symbolize? Düsterdieck makes the *former* signify the natural Israel; Alford, the saints alive at Christ's coming; Hengstenberg and Wordsworth identify both **tribes** and **multitude** as being, in fact, one body, and that the one Christian Church. Our view, as above stated, is, that they are the one universal Church, yet viewed under Old Testament and New Testament aspects. It is thus the twenty-four elders are representatives of the two-fold one Church, and these **tribes** and **multitude** are the constituency in mass of those twenty-four representatives. St. John thus is loyal to the old Church, from whom Christ sprang, yet expands the scope so as to take in the Church universal. And in this great multitude we are inclined to include, not only the redeemed since Christ, but all the redeemed before Christ without the pale of circumcision, even the patriarchal Church before Abraham, who was, in fact, a Gentile until he was circumcised. We find in the New Jerusalem a parallel to the twenty-four elders in the twelve apostolic names on its foundations, and its twelve tribal gates, xxi, 12, 14, where see notes. **No man could number**—The **twelve tribes** could be definitely, though symbolically, numbered; but the universal Church is innumerable. Bengel finely remarks, "The sealed were a great number, and the number of angels in v, 11 was greater, and of the horsemen in ix, 16, where there are hundreds of millions; still, these companies were capable of being numbered; but the one before us could neither John nor any one number." The idea that few are saved is probably true of the present age of the world,

people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, [l] clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; **10** And cried with a loud voice, saying, [m] Salvation to our God [n] which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. **11** [o] And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, **12** [p] Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for

l Chapter 3. 5, 18; 4. 4; 6. 11; verse 14.——*m* Psa. 3. 8; Isa. 43. 11; Jer. 3. 23; Hosea 13. 4; chapter 19. 1.——*n* Chapter 5. 13.——*o* Chapter 4. 6; Psa. 103. 20, 21; 148. 1, 2.——*p* Chap. 5. 13, 14.

but not of the millennial ages, or of the whole final number. Note on xx, 4. **Nations . . . tongues** — The creational *four*. **Before the throne** — The symbolic and temporary theophanic throne of this apocalypse, not the eternal throne of the eternal heavens. Yet this is symbolic of that, showing, in momentary exhibition, the eternal relations of things. **White robes**—Emblems of spotless purity. Note on iii, 4. **Palms**—Usually held here as emblems of victory. To this Hengstenberg objects as a pagan symbolism, palms being the prize of victors in palestric games. He maintains that the allusion is to the **palms** of the feast of tabernacles, (Leviticus xxiii, 40,) which were a token of harvest joy at the autumn ingathering. The yearly labour, at this feast, was done, the fruit was stored, and the ease and enjoyment of winter commenced. This feast also commemorated the taking possession of the Promised Land, after the journey through the wilderness. Hengstenberg's finding the allusion to be drawn from the festal **palms** is right, and there is a double reference to the joy of the arrival in Canaan and to the yearly harvest. But this festal joy was also a joy of victory; victory over the foes and obstacles of the wilderness sojourn, and over the difficulties and dangers of agriculture. And so these **palms** betokened victory in the pilgrimage and battle of life. The Israelite use of festal **palms** was earlier than the pagan, and was doubtless appropriated by the latter from the Hebrews. The palm may still, therefore, be held in our Christian hymnology as symbol of heavenly triumph over foes.

I asked them whence their victory came;
They, with united breath,
Ascribed their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to his death.— *Watts.*

10. **Cried**—Greek present tense, *they cry;* it is a constant chant they raise. **Loud voice** — Pealing through the air all over the uncovered temple enclosure. **Salvation** be ascribed **to our God**—As its primal source and author And **unto the Lamb**—As its instrumental cause, by his sacrifice as symbolic **lamb.**

c. *Surrounding circle of* ANGELS: *with song,* 11, 12.

11. **All the angels**—Of v, 11. **Stood** — Literally, Greek pluperfect, *had stood;* had been standing all the time while the seer was contemplating the **great multitude,** so that as he awakes from that reverie this angel throng break on his view as a sort of sublime surprise. The theophanic court is filled with the **multitude,** and then in larger circle the angel band surrounds the whole. It must have been with a very keen, intuitive eye that our seer could recognise the enfoldings of so many visions. **On their faces**—It was no decorous bow, no solemn kneel, but a total prostration, with their foreheads touching the celestial ground.

12. **Amen**—Their profound assent to the **loud voice** of the **great multitude. Blessing**—We have here the seven ascriptions; the first three headed by **blessing,** the remaining four by **thanksgiving.** The former refer more to the moral attributes of God—his **glory** and his **wisdom;** the latter to his physical attributes, his **power** in manifestation, his intrinsic *strength.* **Be unto our God** —Both in our

ever and ever. Amen. **13** And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in [q] white robes? and whence came they? **14** And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, [r] These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have [s] washed their robes, and made them white in the blood

[q] Verse 9.—[r] Chap. 6. 9; 17. 6.—[s] Isa. 1. 18; Heb. 9. 14; 1 John 1. 7; chap 1. 5; Zech. 3. 3–5.

ascription and in their intrinsic reality.

d. ELDER'S *explanation, and glorious picture of their* HEAVENLY STATE, 13–17.

13. **One of the elders**—It was fitting that one of the representatives of the Church should unfold the mysteries of the Church triumphant. Nor must we puzzle ourselves to know how **one** of the circle of **elders,** enveloped in the crowd of the **great multitude,** and that girt round with the circle of countless angels, could address an outsider, as John, who stands surveying the whole assemblage. Allow the freedom of a celestial vision. The inner circles within the outer circles can transparently be seen with the supernatural eye, for the outer circles are transparent, though visible to its glance. And in the spirit-land distance is no obstacle to utterance and hearing. Celestials (and John was now a *pro tem.* celestial) can converse without voice, by pure impartation of thought. See our note on 2 Cor. xii, 4. **Answered**—He **answered** the unuttered questionings expressed in John's eyes. So in Acts iii, 12, Peter **answered** the "wondering" of the crowd in Solomon's porch. **What**—The angel *answers* by first stating John's mental question. The Greek is more elegant than our English. *These, the arrayed in robes white, who are they, and whence came they?* "In this," says Bede, "he interrogates that he may teach." Often the most skilful interrogator is the wisest teacher. Wetstein remarks that these questions occur in both Homer and Virgil as the ordinary queries put by ancient hospitality to strangers. Such was the early habit in America, as foreign travellers often tauntingly reported. Yet one English traveller justly remarked, that such questions had a different sound in our Western wilds from similar ones in the streets of London.

14. **Sir**—The Greek is the original of our *sir*, and in modern Greek is used for that word. But Bengel, Hengstenberg, and Alford consider it here as a more reverent *my Lord*, approaching nigh to the attempt at worship in a future passage or two. **Thou knowest**—The Greek **thou,** here expressly inserted, implies emphasis upon it. The knowledge to answer those questions is in *thee*, not in *me*. And the words imply a request for answer which the seer was too modest to make. **Out of great tribulation**—The epithet **great** is emphatic, by being placed with its article after the noun, which our English idiom does not permit. Yet it is done with proper names, as Alexander the Great; and similarly this is **tribulation the great.** But what **tribulation** is here meant? Some say the "*great tribulation*" of Matt. xxiv, 21, just preceding the judgment-day. But plainly, this company robed in **white** is that of verse 9, which embraces *all* the redeemed. The **great tribulation** is, therefore, the battle of probationary life under pressure of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Those fine lines of Wesley, therefore,

> Who are these arrayed in white,
> Brighter than the noonday sun,
> *Foremost* of the sons of light,
> *Nearest* the eternal throne?

so far as they represent these as martyrs or *special* sufferers for Christ seem to be a mistake. All Christians are these martyrs. **Washed their robes**—Purified their characters. This is a very vivid image of sanctification through the atonement. It illustrates how deep the doctrine of the atonement maintained in the apocalypse. But we must look through the intense imagery at the literal fact, and not allow our imagination to be lost in the imagery. There is no literal robe, no literal washing the robe in blood. What is true is, that Christ died for

of the Lamb. **15** Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall [t]dwell among them. **16** [u]They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; [v]neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. **17** For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne [w]shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: [x]and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

t Isaiah 4. 5, 6; chap. 21. 3.——*u* Isa. 49. 10.——*v* Psa. 121, 6; chap. 21. 4.

w Psalm 23. 1; 36. 8; John 10. 11, 14.——*x* Isa. 25. 8; chapter 21. 4.

our sins, and through the merit of his atonement the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us, giving us power to resist temptation, to repress our disordered affections, and bring all into obedience to the law of Christ. And that is sanctification.

15. **Therefore**—In the next three verses we have a brief, exquisite glimpse of a heavenly pastoral, where the redeemed are the sheep and **the Lamb** is the shepherd. The passage is cognate with xxi and xxii, describing the final heaven of the blessed. It is, indeed, said in xxi that there is no **temple,** as is here mentioned; but it is said, xxi, 22, that the Lamb is **the temple.** The present passage might be congenially inserted between verses 21 and 22 of chap. xxii. With regard to the symbolic numbers of this passage Hengstenberg says: "The delineation of the blessedness is completed in a threefold three: they are before the throne, they serve, they are tented;—they hunger not, they thirst not, they suffer no heat;—the Lamb feeds them, leads them, wipes their tears." **Therefore** — Because of their purification through the sacrificial blood. **Before the throne of God**—And not driven from his presence into the "lake of fire," xx, 15, the awful reverse of the celestial state. **Serve him...in his temple**—As Stuart well explains, they are made priests unto God, and the ordinary phraseology regarding priests, *they serve day and night in the temple,* is applied to them. **Shall dwell among them**—Literally, Greek, shall spread tent (or tabernacle) over them. Perhaps the meaning is, shall spread himself as tent over them.

16. **They**—We may render literally, *They will hunger never more, nor thirst ever; no, nor ever will fall upon them the sun or heat-blast.*

17. **In the midst of the throne**—In the central point of the circle comprehended in the more extended sense of the word **throne.** For the term seems to mean not the seat only, but the entire royal space. **Feed them**—Will *shepherd* them, performing all the office of a shepherd to guard, protect, guide, fold, fodder, and water them. **Living fountains of waters**—Greek, ζωῆς πηγὰς ὑδάτων, *life's fountains of waters.* In the New Jerusalem, xxii, 1, there flows "a river of the water of life ...proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." But in the rural regions of the "new earth" are many *springs of the water of life,* where the Lamb shall shepherd his flock, watering them at the fountains of immortality. **All tears**—When the fountain of immortality is opened the fountain of tears is closed. For, as in xxi, 4, where this promise is repeated, with death all pain, all sorrow disappear, and the eye forever forgets to weep. And he who thus forever banishes our tears is no less than our loving Father, **God.**

The application of this chapter to the establishment of Christianity under Constantine in the Roman empire, as made by the over-historical interpreters, as Newton and Elliott, seems scarce to need a refutation. It appears inapplicable, both in *position* and in *nature.* In *position,* for there is nothing in the train of the narrative to bring us to the event. The four first seals are plainly correlative, and, though following in time-order, are not chronological. Equally unchronological is the martyr-cry of the fifth seal, or the mundane dissolution of the sixth. We have no bridge to carry us

CHAPTER VIII.

AND [a]when he had opened

[a] Chapter 6. 1.

over to the age of Constantine. Nor in *nature*, for it is a heavenly, not an earthly, scene. It is in the spirit-world, before the divine throne, and not at the court of Constantine. Standing where it does, if it be made to figure any earthly event, it is so little specific that it might just as well figure any other period of religious triumph as the age of Constantine; as, for instance, the Reformation, or Wesleyan and Whitefieldian revival. As a counter picture to the dark scenes of the six seals it has its perfect place and nature. Far distant in time as its literal fulfilment is, it is ever present to the eye of vivid faith. Amid the gainsayings of a profane world and the trials of our earthly life, this vision dawns directly before the eye of our soul, with its consolations and its glory.

Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer, though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
By faith they bring it nigh!

the seventh seal, there was [b]silence in heaven about the space

[b] Job 4. 16; Hab. 2. 20; Zech. 2. 13.

CHAPTER VIII.

Seventh seal issues no revelation, but inaugurates the seven trumpets, 1-6.

1. **And**—The cycle of the six seals being finished, the office of the seventh seal is simply to inaugurate the next seven-series—that of the trumpets. Just so it is the office of the seventh trumpet to issue the seven-series of the vials, with all the events of which they are a central part. Again, as the purpose of the opening of the seals is *revelation*, so the sounding of the trumpets is *proclamation*. That is, *the cycle of world-destiny, briefly disclosed by the seals, is, with a new round, enlarged and proclaimed by the trumpets.* And thus the revealing part of the apocalypse is a double cycle, a lesser and a larger; the lesser is given in chapters vi and vii; the larger, commencing here, fills the rest of the book. The following tabulation will show this parallelism:—

PARALLEL CYCLES.

	SEALS.		TRUMPETS.	
Four Creational.	1. White horse of conquest. 2. Red horse of carnage. 3. Black horse of scarcity. 4. Pale horse of pestilence.	vi, 1-8.	Four Creational. Fiery-bloody hail. Fiery mountain-bolt. Wormwood. Dimness of luminaries.	viii, 7-12.
Three Spiritual.	5. Souls under altar-persecution.* vi, 9-11.		Three Spiritual. *Three woe-trumpets*, namely:—* Locustine demons, ix, 1-12. War-demons, ix, 13-21. Antichrist, xii, 1-xiii, 18.	
	6. Dissolution and judgment. vi, 12-17.		Three overthrows of antichrist, Millennial imprisonment of Satan, Post-millennial destruction of Satan, Dissolution and judgment.	xiv, 1-xx, 3.
	Sealing of saints in glory. vii.		New Heavens, New Jerusalem.	xxi, xxii.

These two columns verify each other, demonstrating that our interpretation must be generically correct. See further in note on xii, 1.

* It will be noted that in both columns here is the changing point. Thus far the powers of evil are triumphant. Now commence the redemption and retribution.

of half an hour. **2** [c]And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; [d]and to them were given

[c] Matthew 18. 10; Luke 1. 19.

Silence in heaven—The inauguration of this new seven-series opens with solemn ceremony. A dread silence, incense offering, fire casting, ominous soundings. This imposing prelude is based upon the scenes of the daily sacrifice offered at the temple, and familiar to every Jerusalemite. Morning and evening the people assembled at the temple, incense was burned on the incense altar, and then a lamb was sacrificed on the great altar. While the incense was burning, and its fragrant smoke ascending, there was profound **silence,** the people breathing their voiceless prayer without. Notes on Luke i, 8–10. Next, when the sacrifice was being offered, **the trumpets** were sounded, attended with Davidic instruments and with voices. See 2 Chron. xxix, 25–28.

Accordingly, it was during the **silence** in this theophanic or symbol **heaven** (note iv, 11) that the incense of verses 3 and 4 is burning, and the trumpeters of verse 2 appear at their stand, and the trumpets are placed in their hands. The **silence** is broken by the detonations of verse 5, followed by the trumpets, 6, 7. This plainly preludial character of 1–6, will, perhaps, clearly show that the passage belongs to the (so to speak) machinery of the panorama, and not to the predictive part of the work. To make it, as the ultra-historical interpreters do, represent and predict historical events, mistakes the frame for the picture. **Half an hour**—About the length of time of the incense burning.

2. **I saw...seven angels which stood**—From this phraseology, Stuart identifies them with "the seven presence-angels," or amshaspends of the Persians. He quotes the words of Raphael, in the apocryphal Book of Tobit: "I am...one of the seven angels...which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." And so, also, he quotes the seven "watchers" of the Book of Enoch, who wait and

seven trumpets. **3** And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there

[d] 2 Chron. 29. 25–28.

watch for the divine commands. Alford draws the strong inference that the existence of these angels is a part of the additional revelation derived by the Jews from the captivity. See our note on Matt. i, 20. Hengstenberg takes a different view. He shows that there are, indeed, ranks and gradations of angels: "For God's creations are no democratic chaos." He quotes the seraphim of Isaiah vi; the "angel-princes" of Dan. x, 13; the "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers," of St. Paul; also 1 Pet. iii, 22, and Jude verse 8, in proof of these ranks. Yet this particular **seven** he believes to be only occasional, arising from the sevenfold arrangements of the book, and this **seven** would indeed have been ten, had there been ten trumpets. Agreeing with Hengstenberg in this occasional character of the seven, and in the existence of angel ranks, we doubt whether this *standing* implies any permanent rank of this seven. The seven *had been standing* before John saw them; and they had stood before the throne for a definite purpose; namely, the receiving and blowing the trumpets. They **stood before** the theophanic throne just as the **another angel,** verse 3, **stood before the altar,** both to perform a given task. The Greek for **stood** is in the perfect tense, *who have stood,* or *have been standing.* Just so in ver. 5, **took** is perfect —*has taken.* The seer's eye watches and tells what *has been done,* as soon as it is done. So, "I saw the seven angels who have been for some time standing" to receive the trumpets.

3. **Another angel**—Who serves as priest to burn the incense. Compare our notes of Luke i, 8–11. We suppose the theophanic throne, with its court assemblage, to occupy the holy of holies. As the crowds of the last chapter have disappeared, the golden altar of incense is seen in its place in the front apartment. **Censer...incense**—See note on Hebrews ix, 4

was given unto him much incense, that he should [1]offer *it* with [e]the prayers of all saints upon [f]the golden altar which was before the throne. **4** And [g]the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* [2]into the earth: and [h]there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, [i]and an earthquake. **6** And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

1 Or, *add it to the prayers.*——*e* Chap. 5. 8.——*f* Exod. 30. 1; chap. 6. 9.——*g* Psa. 141. 2; Luke 1. 10.

2 Or, *upon.*——*h* Chap. 16. 18.——*i* 2 Sam. 22. 8; 1 Kings 19. 11; Acts 4. 31.

Should offer it with the prayers—Literal Greek, *should give it to the prayers.* **The prayers** are ascending, and the angel-priest gives the **incense** as accessory to the **prayers,** to imbue them with its acceptable fragrance and buoy them up to an approving God. **All the saints**—Not of the martyrs alone. The martyrs called once for retribution (vi, 9) on their persecutors; but the great body of saints always, with the martyrs often, call for grace and mercy, both on themselves and on the world. **Altar...before...throne**—And, therefore, the **incense** and **prayers** coming direct to God.

4. **Came**—Greek, "*And the smoke of the incense went up to the prayers of the saints, out of the hand of the angel.*" The incense went up to the ascending prayers to perfume and reinforce them. **Before God**—The ascending incense was in the theophanic presence.

5. **The censer** has now been emptied of its incense. **The angel** then fills it with **altar-fire,** and flings the **fire** upon the earth, and terrible detonations arise. A most striking symbol. But we do not agree with Hengstenberg and Alford, that these vengeful **voices** and the judgments that follow are *consequences* of the **prayers of all** the **saints.** No. Save the martyrs' cry for justice, the ascending prayer of the universal Church is for the world's conversion, reformation, salvation. But on the contrary there is the terrible **fire**—the reverse of the incense—the ordinary Scripture symbol of *divine wrath.* And this emblem of wrath, **fire,** will, as will soon appear, be found in *three* if not in all *four* of the judgments of the four creational trumpets. In each appears, as it were, a coal from the angel's **censer.** Yet this **fire** is more deeply the symbol of divine *purity,* indicating on the one side its purifying power in the believer, and on the other side its condemnatory and consuming power upon the profane. **The earth,** in its now fallen state, is, as it were, impregnated with sin, and when the **fire** of divine purity is **cast** upon it, then, as when two opposite chemical elements come together, a terrible explosion results. The incense of saintly prayer goes up to heaven; the fire of divine wrath is cast down upon the earth. **Voices... earthquake**—The creational *four* in something of climax. These are but monitions of judgments soon to be realized.

6. **Prepared...to sound**—From the nature of **trumpets** and from the frequent mention of **blood** in the judgments of the first four, Hengstenberg concludes that the whole six are a "war" series, entirely "war." But the trumpets of 2 Chron. xxix, 25–28, were not war trumpets, but ceremonial and proclamation trumpets. The sevenfold trumpets overthrowing Jericho, typical of the overthrow of the antichristic capital, Babylon, was a bloodless overthrow. And **blood** within the bodily frame is "the life," but without it, it is the symbol of death, death by any method.

IV. The Seven Trumpets, 7–xx, 10.

Of **the trumpets,** the first four are mundane, or earthly; each of the four blasts draws down a judgment upon some creational point, as earth, sea, fountains and rivers; firmamental luminaries. It is the sins of men that draw down these bolts of wrath, rendering every point of creation hos-

7 The first angel sounded, [k] and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast [l] upon the earth: and the third part [m] of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 And the second angel sounded, [n] and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: [o] and the third part of the sea [p] became blood; **9** [q] And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

10 And the third angel sounded, [r] and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, [s] and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; **11** [t] And the name of the star is called Wormwood: [u] and the third part of the waters became wormwood;

k Ezek. 38. 22.——*l* Chap. 16. 2.——*m* Isa. 2. 13; chap. 9. 4.——*n* Jer. 51. 25; Amos 7. 4.——*o* Chap. 16. 3.——*p* Ezek. 14. 19.

q Chap. 16. 3.——*r* Isa. 14. 12; chap. 9. 1.——*s* Chap. 16. 4.——*t* Ruth 1. 20.——*u* Exod. 15. 23; Jer. 9. 15; 23. 15.

tile to our peace. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake," (Gen. iii, 17,) is the key-note. This sad status of humanity has existed through all past ages; but it is here represented to form *a base from which the history of the renovation commences.*

The first four—the earthly trumpets—are each brief as well as terrible; the spiritual, the fifth and sixth, expand into wider dimensions and rise to more spiritual interests; while the seventh trumpet rolls forth its series of events, through all the future scenes of retribution and redemption to the judgment.

Four Creational Trumpets, 7-12.

The First Trumpet—The scorched earth, 7.

7. **Hail . . . fire . . . blood**—Based upon the **hail** plague, Exod. xix, 18–34, with fearful variations. That was "hail, and fire mingled with hail," "and the fire ran along the ground." But in that, the "hail" was the main destroyer, in this, the **fire.** Here the fall of "hail" indicates descent from God; the **fire** is the token of wrath, the **blood** of death. **The third part** in each of the four mundane plagues, being the trinitarian number, indicates *the divine limitation of the evil;* and the proportion of one third indicates that mercy spares more than wrath destroys, even in this sin-filled world.

Second Trumpet—The curse-struck sea, 8, 9.

8, 9. **As it were**—Not really a **mountain,** but a burning bolt, mountain-shaped and mountain-sized. **Fire** again indicates that it is a bolt of wrath; its size is necessary to its doing such damage to so vast a domain as **the sea. The third part** symbolizes a divine proportioning, leaving a major part in beneficence. To the fisherman, the seaman, the merchantman, the beneficence of the sea is thus much despoiled; while the images of **blood** and the **third** of lost ships, may suggest ideas of naval slaughter.

Third Trumpet—The wormwood waters, 10, 11.

10. **Fell a great star**—As the **star fall** of ix, 1, is based on the first **fall** of Satan, so this fall may be based on the apostasy of Adam and his race. **Burning . . . lamp,** or rather *torch,* is emblem, as in previous trumpets, of divine wrath. **Rivers . . . fountains**—The sources of draughts to quench thirst.

11. **Name . . . wormwood**—Wormwood, (often associated with *gall,*) seems to have been either the trouble produced by an apostate, or an emblematic penalty for apostasy. So, in Deut. xxix, 18, the apostate from Jehovah is a "root that beareth gall and wormwood," producing on Israel the guilt and punishment of apostasy. In Jer. xxiii, 15, God threatens against apostate prophets, "I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall." And as Jeremiah, personating the apostasy and downfall of Israel, says, Lam. iii, 15, "He hath filled me with bitterness, he

and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 [v] And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. **13** And I beheld, [w] and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, [x] Woe, woe, woe, to

[v] Isaiah 13. 10; Amos 8. 9.

[w] Chap. 14. 6; 19. 17.—[x] Chap. 9. 12; 11. 14.

hath made me drunken with wormwood." This explains that "root of bitterness," of Heb. xii, 15, where the "root" is the apostate, and the "bitterness" the result of his apostasy. Says Wordsworth, "*Wormwood* is very bitter, and in certain cases produces convulsions, delirium, epilepsy, and death," a fit emblem of the ruin of mind and body produced by the primal apostasy and by sin. The symbolism of our seer in this passage represents vividly how, by this means, those springs and streams which should, in the ideal, be the sources of delight, nourishment, health, and buoyant vitality, become a bitterness, a miasm, a death.

FOURTH TRUMPET—**The smitten luminaries, 12.**

12. **Smitten**—The wrath expressed by **fire** and **burning** in previous trumpets is expressed by a *smite* in this. This may arise from the fact that to darken luminaries by a **fire** is a contradictory conception. **Third part of the sun**—It is the **third part of the sun** and of each star that is darkened, not the one third of the number of luminaries, nor the whole number one third of the time. Assuming a natural, healthful standard of the amount of light, the perpetual diminution of one **third** would produce a ghastly twilight, a chill, and a depression of spirits and health provocative of disease and death. Vivid picture of the sad effects of our loss of divine favour by apostasy and persistent sin. **Day...third part of it**—Not a **third part** of the *time* but of the *degree* of light. **Night likewise**—This smite of the **moon** and **stars** darkens the dimness of **night**, as that of **the sun** the brightness of **day.**

13. *Annunciation of the three woe trumpets*—The four creational are succeeded by the three spiritual trumpets. **An angel**—The reading now adopted by all scholars is *an eagle*. Alford rejects Ewald's idea that the *eagle* is a bird of ill-omen, as also Hengstenberg's idea that it is the contrast to the dove, (John i, 32;) and holds it to be "the symbol of judgment rushing to its prey, as in Deut. xxviii, 49; Hosea viii, 1; Hab. i, 8. We see not why all these Scripture uses do not blend together to characterize **the eagle** as a symbol. He is here certainly a bird of evil omen, the reverse of the dove, and an announcer of judgment; yet all this does not impute to the present announcer an evil or demoniac character, for a good messenger, a prophet, may be the divine announcer of **woe.** Hence we venture to suggest that *an eagle* messenger is not here a strange thing, as the fourth *living being* (iv, 7) was like **a flying eagle,** the very phrase here used; and as this *living being* represents not, like an angel, the celestial, but the *earthly*, so he announces that even the three spiritual trumpets are to bring *woes* to the inhabitants of **the earth. Midst of heaven**—A single Greek compound for which the English compound *mid-heaven* is an exact equivalent. To an English reader the natural idea suggested by the word would be *mid-air*, the space conceptually half way between sky and earth. But Wetstein shows by copious examples that it means in classic Greek the middle or highest point of the sun's course in the sky, the zenith. But the same word in xix, 17, clearly means the heavens where all the birds fly. The angel in that passage stands in the zenith, and the birds fly in the mid-air below. And in xiv, 6, it is the region where an angel flies so low

the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

CHAPTER IX.

AND the fifth angel sounded, [a] and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of [b] the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit; [c] and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and

a Luke 10. 18; chap. 8. 10.—b Luke 8. 31; chap. 17. 8; 20. 1; verses 2, 11.—c Joel 2. 2, 10.

as to be supposed to be heard from the earth. It is in these three places alone of the Greek Testament that the word occurs, and we hold it to be unquestionable that St. John uses it in a sense of his own, and not the classic, meaning the mid-space between earth and the apparent sky. **Inhabiters of the earth**—An adverse descriptive phrase. The *earthy* announcer utters a menace against *earthy* men. The woes are for the evil and profane, "who have not the seal of God," ix, 4. The third woe trumpet will be terrible to such, but ultimately glorious for the *sealed*. The *three woes* are, 1. *The infernal locust demons* of ix, 1–11; 2. *The war-horse demons* of ix, 12–21; and 3. *The anti-christic dragon* of xii, 1–12; entailing as consequences the war between Christ and antichrist, resulting in the eternal triumph of the former.

CHAPTER IX.

The three Spiritual (or Woe) Trumpets, ix-xxii, 6.

THE FIFTH (*first Woe*) TRUMPET—**Abysmal locust-demons — emblems of infernal influences on earth, 1-11.**

Rising from the curse-scarred surface of the earth into the sphere of spiritual woes, we now behold a vivid picture of diabolical influences issuing from hades, headed by Abaddon, and filling the moral atmosphere of our earth. They are presented as hellish locust swarms, in which the qualities of that insect being made the basis, all demoniac traits are added. This picture informed the early believers that the dominating influences of hell on earth were still to continue for awhile, even during the Messianic dispensation, making life a pessimism and death a desire to the profane world. These infernal locusts are an image of *the infernal swarm of errors and vices issuing from hell and Satan, and filling men's lives with misery.*

Hengstenberg interprets the whole as a picture of human war, and justifies his interpretation by several Old Testament passages in which locusts are symbolical of armies, as Jer. xlvi, 23, and li, 27. Yet as these locusts come from the pit and are led by Apollyon, we may believe the image to be elevated from the idea of war between man and man to a moral war of the infernal upon the terrestrial. This is sustained by the prohibition to **kill,** ver. 5, and the still stronger fact that death is sought in vain, ver. 6. It is a strange symbol of physical war which prohibits killing!

1. **Star fall from heaven**—Rather **star** *fallen* **from heaven.** Note iv, 11. The seer did not see the **fall,** for that had taken place ages ago. Jesus in spirit saw Satan *falling* as lightning from heaven. Luke x, 18. He beholds the fallen **star** on **the earth,** as **king** of the infernal **locusts,** and his name is **Abaddon.** Ver. 11. **Was given**—Originally by the Supreme. **Key**—As keeper and sovereign. **Bottomless pit**—In the Greek the ἄβυσσος, or abyss, etymologically signifying, *a depth without a bottom.* Note xiii, 1. But the Greek phrase here is very peculiar—φρεατος τῆς ἀβύσσου, *the well of the abyss.* The abyss is the under world, consisting largely of waters, yet the abode of evil spirits and wicked souls. It is entered from the earth through a narrow descending passage or *well;* and this *well* has a **key** to it held by **Abaddon,** the fallen **star.**

2. **A smoke**—As from the crater of a volcano, indicating that there is a hellish fire in the under world as well as water. This **smoke** images the *infernal darkening power of error, in which sin becomes predominant over our world*

the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. **3** And there came out of the smoke [d] locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, [e] as the scorpions of the earth have power. **4** And it was commanded them [f] that they should not hurt [g] the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which had not [h] the seal of God in their foreheads. **5** And to them it was given that they should not kill them, [i] but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. **6** And in those days [k] shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall

d Exod. 10. 4; Judges 7. 12.—*e* Verse 10.—*f* Chap. 6. 6; 7. 3.—*g* Chap. 8. 7.—*h* Chap. 7. 3; see Exod. 12. 23; Ezek. 9. 4.—*i* Chap. 11. 7; ver. 10.—*k* Job 3. 21; Isa. 2. 19; Jer. 8. 3; chap. 6. 16.

Sun...air...darkened—The moral atmosphere is in a demoniac twilight.

3. **Came out**—Emerging from the smoky volume are flying locustine forms, the demoniac embodiments of hell-born error and seduction, authors of human misery. **Was given**—By divine destiny. **Scorpions of the earth**—Not in distinction from "scorpions of the sea," as Stuart and others; but these supernatural or infernal **locusts** had a **power** symbolized by that of a natural earthly **scorpion.** They could poison and inflame the interior of humanity, the inner man, without killing immediately. So fiery flying serpents and scorpions are associated in Deut. viii, 15; Num. xxi, 6. A similar association of serpents and scorpions, as symbols of the infernal to be trodden on by the holy, is Luke x, 19.

4. **Commanded**—Divine limitation over the powers of evil. **Not hurt the grass**—And so unlike the natural locusts. Their **hurt** was for **men**—profane **men**—without the **seal** of justifying grace. The blessed Spirit given through the atonement is the great preserver from sin and deliverer from hell.

5. **Not kill**—As the war-demons (ver. 18) would. These inflict agonies; agonies from which, indeed, natural death may naturally, in time, result: but it is not the work of these error-demons, as of the war-demons, to slaughter and slay. **Tormented**—For misery is the outflow of error and sin. **Five months**—A divine limitation again, based on the nature of the locust, whose ravages last usually about **five months**; that is, from May to September. And so temptation, error, and sin have not limitless control over all the life of humanity. Gospel truths take their turn of influence and offer. Even the smoke of the bottomless pit produces but twilight here, not total darkness. **Torment of a scorpion**—The wounds of a scorpion are not usually fatal unless they are neglected; but the poison is so acrid that it occasions great agony. Like to this are the images of the hornet, the bee, and the wasp. See the Old Testament, for example Deut. vii, 20; Exod. xxiii, 28; Josh. xxiv, 12; Deut. i, 44. **Torments**—A frequent word in the Greek in the Apocalypse. Its noun-form, *βασανος*, signifies the Lydian touchstone, by which the purity of metals was claimed to be tested. Thence the verb signified any examination of a thing by criticism, or of a person by torture. Thence it signifies any torment or suffering. In the New Testament it never signifies infliction on an inanimate object but once, Matt. xiv, 24, where it speaks of a ship as "tossed by the waves." Our seer applies the term here to the sting of the locusts; to the torment of the people by the two witnesses, xi, 10; to the pains of child-birth, xii, 2; and to the fiery torment of the wicked, xiv, 10; xx, 10.

6. **In those days**—The **days** of the **five** locustine **months**; the periods of a man's subjection to infernal error. **Seek death**—A most intense trait of misery under sin. Life is a pessimism, and death is subjectively looked for as a deliverer. **Not find it**—Not but that death will **find** them: for men will die. But they will subjectively prefer

desire to die, and death shall flee from them. **7** And [l] the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; [m] and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, [n] and their faces *were* as the faces of men. **8** And they had hair as the hair of women, and [o] their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions. **9** And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* [p] as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. **10** And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: [q] and their power *was* to hurt men five months

l Joel 2. 4.——*m* Nahum 3. 17.——*n* Daniel 7. 8.

o Joel 1. 6.——*p* Joel 2. 5-7.——*q* Verse 5.

the sudden death of slaughter (ver. 19) to their long, scorpion-like agonies. Note on vi, 16. **Flee from them**—A slight personification. Their imaginary deliverer takes to flight. Indeed, should he make the serious offer, he might not be so welcome, after all.

7. **Shapes**—A minute description of the locust-demons. In nearly every point there is some basis in the natural locust; but some additional trait both shows them supernatural and suggests the symbolic signification. Infernal, soul-corrupting errors and lies are belligerent like **horses prepared for battle;** are dominant as with **crowns;** have very intelligent and plausible-looking **faces;** are winning, like **women,** but biting as with **teeth of lions;** they are self-fortified, as with **breastplates;** their sounding **wings** indicate their infinite number and their readiness for moral but not slaughtering **battle;** their **stings** indicate what miseries they entail upon the unsealed and profane. Sin is often beautiful to sight, but has ever a sting in its tail. **Like unto . . . as . . . as** — The repeated **as** in this whole description must be specially noted. It indicates in each case resemblance, not a reality. These **locusts** were only **as horses,** not real **horsemen,** such as meet us in verse 16. It is a moral, or rather immoral, army that is here symbolized. Naturalists have remarked the resemblance of the locust to a horse. Hence **he** is called in German a *heupferd,* a grass-*horse.* So Joel, (ii, 4,) describing locusts, says, "Their appearance is as the appearance of horses." **Crowns like gold**—"Probably means the *horns* (antlers, feelers) of the locust tipped with yellow, that is, with a golden colour, and these are in all probability here called crowns to show that they are the emblems of victorious and irresistible march." **Faces . . . as . . . . of men**—However devilish or brutal in nature, error must wear an intelligent, rational, and humanized look. A distant resemblance in the locust to a human *face* is the natural base that suggests the symbol.

8. **Hair of women**—"If a woman have long hair it is a glory to her." 1 Cor. xi, 15. "De Wette quotes from Niebuhr an Arabic proverb, in which the antlers of locusts are compared to the hair of girls."—*Alford.* The hairs of the natural locust are naturally increased and beautified to form the symbol of feminine attractiveness. Error is r ason-like, like man, and seductive, like woman.

9. **Breastplates** — "Referred here to the hard and firm cuticle on the fore part of the locust, which serves as a shield while it moves among the thorny and furzy vegetation."—*Stuart.* Such is the natural basis which symbolizes how damning lie is ever ready to defend itself in the moral battle with truth and righteousness. **Sound of their wings**—It is from their **wings** that issues the stridulous noise of the locust tribe. And so the wings of swarming lies from the pit fill the air with their monotonous noise and confusion. Human life is distracted with their eternal racket.

10. **Tails**—The secret of their power of harming without killing. The consequences left behind by error are the **stings in their tails.** Their **faces** are fair and seductive; their **tails** are pointed with poison and pangs.

11 [r]And they had a king over them, *which is* [s]the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name [1]Apollyon.

12 [1]One woe is past; *and*, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. **13** And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, **14** Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound [u]in the great river Euphrates. **15** And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared [2]for an hour, and a day,

r Eph. 2. 2.—s Ver. 1.—1 Or, *A destroyer.*

t Chap. 8. 13.—u Chap. 16. 12.—2 Or, *at.*

11. **A king over them**—Unlike the natural locusts, who are a noisy and pestilent democracy. **Abaddon**—He is King Destruction. For so the **Hebrew** word signifies. In Job xxvi, 6, and Prov. xv, 11, it seems to designate the place of the destruction of the wicked. So that here the word for sheol, or the abyss, or **bottomless pit,** is framed into a name for its **angel.** In xx, 14, death and hades are framed into personalities. **Abaddon** is translated by our seer into Greek, as Apollyon, Destroyer. As **angel of the bottomless pit,** bearing its title as his **name,** and heading the demons of sin swarming through the world, he can hardly be less than Satan himself. Abaddon and his locusts are a plain image of the devil and his angels, Matthew xxv, 41. This description is a reduction to picture of St. Paul's "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience."

SIXTH (*the second Woe*) TRUMPET—**The war-demons of Christendom, 12-21.**

13. **A voice** — Greek, *one* **voice;** perhaps emphatic *one.* The striking thought then would be, that the *one* **voice** came from **the four horns.** There was a unanimity in **the four. From**—Literal Greek, *out from.* The **altar** was impregnate with the spirit of divine retribution, and called through all its **horns** for its speedy execution. **Altar**—Notes on vi, 3, and viii, 5.

14. **The great river Euphrates**—Literal Greek, *in the river, the great Euphrates.* Alford notes that this river-symbol has been the puzzle of commentators. It certainly will be insoluble to any one who looks to the literal **Euphrates,** or to any Eastern locality, for the meaning. It was upon that great real **river,** illustrious in profane and sacred history, that Babylon was founded. But in our Apocalypse, Babylon is symbolically antichrist's capital. And we are expressly told that the waters upon which Babylon "sitteth" "are," (verse 15,) "peoples and nations." That is, they are the human supporters of antichrist universally, without regard to locality. And thus while the locustine influences come upon the earth from the bottomless pit and from Abaddon, the tumults and bloodsheds of war spring up from the masses of men; from the lust of the flesh and the wild ambitions of the depraved heart. The **four angels** are the war-spirits **in** and among those "peoples and nations." They are **four,** the cosmical number, implying that no particular war is meant, but the sum total of wars during the Christian ages. These are **bound** by divine restraint until *the* **hour** determined by divine justice. Then the word goes forth, **Loose!** and the **four** war-**angels** spring in all directions on their mission of vengeance.

15. **For an hour** — Our version

and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. **16** And [v] the number of the army [w] of the horsemen *was* two hundred thousand thousand: [x] and I heard the number of them. **17** And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: [y] and the heads of

[v] Psa. 68. 17; Dan. 7. 10.—[w] Ezek. 38. 4.—[x] Chap. 7. 4.

gives the indefinite article instead of the definite *the*, and thus misleads some interpreters into a very devious course. They have taken these notes of time as telling *how long* the war was to last, and then, having calculated, symbolically, the length of the period, have endeavoured to find a war of the exact length in actual history. But these time-words indicate not the length of any one war, but the precise instant when, by divine permission, they commence. At the right **hour,** in its due place in **month** and **year,** the minister of vengeance springs forth. **For to slay**—The error-demons only *torment;* the war-demons **slay. Third part of men**—The divine number *three* indicates, like the **five months** of verse 5, (where see note,) a divinely-fixed limitation. It of course implies no literal fulfilment as to number.

16. **Horsemen**—Alford correctly says, that the **four angels** are apparently "resolved into the hosts of cavalry.' The cavalry alone, of this great army, is stupendous, letting alone the infantry. The **number** amounts to two hundred millions. It is the decimal of totality raised to the seventh power, and reduplicated, to indicate how vast the totality of the wars of the Christian ages would be! **Heard the number**—For no human eye could see it.

17. **I saw**—The forms **of the horses;** he could only hear **the number. Fire**—Rather, fire-coloured, a fiery red. **Jacinth**—A dull, smoky red. **Brimstone**—An adjective, *sulphureous.* The three colours of the breastplates correspond to the **three**

the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. **18** By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. **19** For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: [z] for their tails *were* like unto ser-

[y] 1 Chronicles 12. 8; Isaiah 5. 28, 29.—[z] Isaiah 9. 15.

elements issuing from the horses' **mouths. Out of their mouths**—Had real cavalries been described, swords and arrows would have been in their hands. But these are not war-men, but war-demons—symbols of the furies of war. The **fire** is the blaze of warlike wrath; the **smoke** (see note on verse 2) betokens moral darkness; the **brimstone,** destruction.

19. **Tails**—Another demoniac trait. See note on verse 10. **Had heads**—

Alford, with justice, reprehends Elliot's absurdly making these **tails** figure the "horse-tails" on the standards of the Turkish pachas. Indeed, a large share of the interpretations of the historical commentators may fairly be styled exegesis run wild. More taking, perhaps true, is the idea that the **fire, smoke,** and **brimstone,** here, are a foreshadowing of the effects of gunpowder. But they are

pents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. **20** And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues [a]yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship [b]devils, [c]and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: **21** Neither repented they of their murders, [d]nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

CHAPTER X.

AND I saw another mighty an-

a Deut. 31. 29.——*b* Lev. 17. 7; Deut. 32. 17; Psa. 106. 37; 1 Cor. 10. 20.

c Psalm 115. 4; 135. 15; Daniel 5. 23.——*d* Chapter 22. 15.

really intended as *infernal* imageries correspondent to those in verses 1, 2. The **mouths** of the **horses** breathed the direct destructions of war; the **tails** figured the resulting effects entailed by it. The **tails** of the **horses** became as serpents with biting **heads** at the end. A fit intimation of the devastation, poverty, demoralization, and barbarization, left behind by wars.

20. **The rest**—The two thirds of the profane world, not the sealed of God, (note verse 4,) remained obdurate. War punishes and reduces the number of the wicked and brings them to subjection; but it rather demoralizes than reforms the incorrigible. **Repented not**—Of their false religions in this verse; of their wicked practices in the next verse. The pagan adhered to his idols, the criminal to his crimes. Two classes of pagan thinkers are distinguished; those who worshipped the mere image, and those who worshipped the supposed deity it represented. **Devils**—Demons, which in the Greek includes both good and bad spirits.

21. Four classes of crime are named as specimens. They are crimes, not of pagan alone, but of virtual pagans, even in Christian lands.

PART THIRD.

THE ANGELOPHANIC APOCALYPSE.

x, 1–xxii, 7.

CHAPTER X.

1. THE ANGELOPHANY.—Descent of the World-Angel, 1, 2.

1. **And**—Of the three "woe trumpets," the first two are given in the last chapter, and the third (being the seventh of the seven trumpets) now remains to be given. But as this is *the great historic trumpet*, it must be preceded by a grand prelude—a presentation of a World-Angel on the scenes, announcing the wonderful contents of the trumpet, (chap. x,) and a miniature set of symbols, shadowing in summary its events, chapter xi, 1–13. Then (xi, 14–19) the trumpet sounds, and premonitions are given by heavenly voices of the glorious results to take place under that sounding. The seventh trumpet begins with the first overthrow of antichrist by Christ, xii, 1, and continues through a series of such overthrows until the final judgment at xx, 11. The entire contents of the seventh trumpet are, comprehensively, *the world-wide contest between Christ and antichrist*, in which the latter is successively overthrown. The symbols under which the oposing sides in the war are presented may be seen in the following

CONTRASTS OF THE WAR.

CHRISTIC.		ANTICHRISTIC.
1. The man child, Christ, xii, 5.	*versus*	The dragon, Satan, xii, 3.
2. The Lamb, v, 6.	*vs.*	The beast, xiii, 1.
3. The twenty-four elders, iv, 4.	*vs.*	The two-horned Lamb.
4. Jerusalem, the Church, the capital of Christ, xx, 4.	*vs.*	Babylon, Rome, the antichurch, the antichristic capital, xviii, 2.
5. Bride, the Lamb's wife, xxi, 9.	*vs.*	Antichrist's harlot, xv, 1.
6. Souls of saints enthroned, xx, 4.	*vs.*	Souls of saints beneath altar, vi, 4.
7. New Jerusalem, xxi, 1.	*vs.*	Lake of fire, xx, 15.

gel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: [a]and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and [b]his face *was* as it were the sun, and [c]his feet as pillars of fire: **2** And he had in his hand a little book open: [d]and he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, [e]seven thunders uttered their voices. **4** And when

a Ezek. 1. 28.—*b* Matt. 17. 2; chap. 1. 16.

c Chap. 1. 15.—*d* Matt. 28. 18.—*e* Chap. 8. 5.

These antithetic objects, carefully noted, serve to fix, reciprocally, each other's meaning, and verify the truth of the exegesis. The hostile presentation of antichrist and his group are xii, xiii. The three overthrows of antichrist are xiv–xx, 3.

Another mighty angel—In addition to the **strong** or **mighty** (for the Greek word is the same in both passages) **angel** who heralded the second commission, v, 2. Though this angel suggests Gabriel, as that does Michael, yet it might be rather considered as a purely symbolical personality, representing the divine providence over the world—"God in history"—overruling wrong and finally bringing out the triumph of right.

But there seem to be grave reasons for supposing this angel to be, not a symbol, but a personal representative, of the third Person in the adorable Trinity. In favour of this view we submit the following points:—

1. The three apocalypses are then dispensed by the three Personalities of the Trinity. We have thereby a Christophany and a virtual Pneumatophany, dominated by a central Theophany. 2. The description of the person of the angel exalts him to the representatively divine. The splendour of his appearance is described in terms far superior to those employed of any beings but the other two divine Personalities. He resembles the first in his sunlike face and his feet of burning brass. His tread upon earth and sea indicates his world-wide domain. His voice of seven thunders is counterpart to the "seven lamps" of iv, 5, "which are the seven spirits." 3. His office is that of the revealing Spirit. It is divine world-wide, world-enduring prediction. He is the commissioner of our New Testament seer, giving him the volume of the future to be amalgamated into his personal being, constituting him *the* prophet. He pronounces the sentence (verse 11) declaring John's universal commission. **Come down**—Literally, *descending out from* **heaven.** The **heaven** is the upper sky overarching the plane of mystical vision, as the **earth** and **sea** are below it. See note on iv, 11. **His face was as the sun;** his **head** is wreathed with **a rainbow;** his chest is clad with **a cloud;** and from beneath its skirts his legs and feet are seen to descend **as pillars of fire.** Thus the grandest phenomena of nature combine to represent his majesty.

2. **A little book**—In contradistinction to the **book** of v, 2, which was the full *volumen* or roll, which contained the entire prophecies of the apocalypse. From this **little book** no part of the predictions issue. It is simply a symbol of the seer's renewed commission, which he swallows to indicate that the prophecy is within, and part of, him, body, soul, and spirit. **Foot...sea...earth**—Each foot stands not upon the "margin" of **sea** and **earth,** but the centre of each. Nor are we to narrow the terms, with Düsterdieck and others, to the Mediterranean and Asia Minor. Earth and sea, to the seer, are a vast plain, and the form of the angel is so immense that his feet claim domain of both. He is the World-Angel, proclaiming the world's destinies. **Open**—Symbolizing revelation.

2. World-Angel announces that the seventh trumpet's sounding will finish earthly history, 3-7.

3. **A lion roareth**—The most majestic sound sent forth from living nature. But the **voice** of the representative Angel is at once reverberated by

the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, [f] Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. **5** And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth [g] lifted up his hand to heaven, **6** And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, [h] who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, [i] that there should be

[f] Daniel 8. 26; 12. 4, 9.—[g] Exodus 6. 8; Daniel 12. 7.

[h] Nehemiah 9. 6; chapter 4. 11; 14. 7.—[i] Daniel 12. 7; chapter 16. 17.

voice of a diviner tone. **Seven thunders** has in the Greek the definite article. They are co-ordinate, therefore, with the seven spirits, the seven stars, the seven churches, as a divine symbol. As these **thunders** are also a **voice** which **uttered** unrevealable mysteries, they seem to be the **voices** of none but the divine Spirit himself. The psalmist says, God thundereth marvellously with his voice. And is it not the true meaning that the lion-like roar of the representative **Angel** is answered by the loftier roar of God's own voice? The literal words are: *and when he cried, uttered the seven thunders their own voices.* That is, the very **own voices** of the seven thunders were the divine response to the cry. Then as "the seven lamps" are the light, and "the seven eyes" are the omniscience of the Spirit, so "the seven thunders" are the expression of his omnipotence. **Seven thunders uttered**—On this mysterious passage we suggest: 1. The **thunders** were the utterances of that Spirit which convinces the world of sin and judgment. 2. As co-ordinate with the seven seals and trumpets, they were, being **thunders,** far more terrible than either. 3. They must be interpreted in close connexion between the *cry* of the angel preceding and his *oath* which follows. They must be a response to the first and be responded to by the latter. The cry was a wail of woe at man's doom; the thunders might have been a menace of wrath at man's sin. 4. Hence we understand the Holy Spirit as uttering the demands of absolute justice for sin; describing in terms too deep for human language the guilt of sin, the awfulness of the final sentence and doom, and the demand which absolute justice makes that execution should be *immediate.* To this the angel-oath responds that judgment, if not immediate, if even long delayed, is *sure;* for **the angel** swears that the seventh trumpet shall reach that result.

4. **About to write**—A phrase which suggests that the apostle was immediate reporter and recorder of all he heard and saw. **A voice from heaven**—One of the monitory directions occurring along the course of the apocalyptic movements. The thunders were God's prophetic voice; these were divine directions for the panorama. **Seal up...write them not**—As if the blank space were really contained in the seer's scroll, and could there be *sealed* even though by him unwritten.

The seer seems about, in his simplicity, to undertake an impossible task; namely, to translate the uttered meanings of the **thunders** into human words. If the full import of death, judgment, and eternity could come upon our souls it would be too much for us; we would be struck by it to the earth, as Saul of Tarsus was overthrown. Only by divine mental exaltation could John receive the uttered conceptions; and when obedience induces him to purpose the writing, divine wisdom excuses and peremptorily forbids the attempt.

5, 6. **Hand to heaven**—The angel in Daniel xii, 7 swore with both hands uplifted: in Gen. xiv, 22, Deut. xxxii, 40, and Ezek. xx, 5, 6, and here, with but one hand upraised. **Who created... therein**—The oath of God's representative World-Angel fittingly ranges over the wide creation. **Time no longer**—Our English translators seem to have understood the Angel as announcing the close of sublunary **time.** And

time no longer: **7** But [k] in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

[k] Chapter 11. 15.

8 And [l] the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

[l] Verse 4; Isaiah 30. 21.

that would make good sense, for he really does announce the judgment day. But the antithesis which that supposes between the terms **time** and *eternity*, seems not to exist in New Testament language. The real meaning is, that no delay or protracted **time** should intervene between the terminus of the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the judgment day. The consummation should, without delay, take place **in the days** of its sounding.

Disterdieck indeed remarks that the trumpet is not supposed to be sounding during the whole period that its events are transpiring. Like the opened seal, the trumpet momentarily announces a new series of events. That, if true, affects no interpretation. The **days of the voice** would then be the period the announcing **voice** indicates. Yet it may be said, that as the seal remained open through its whole period, so the trumpet remained sounding. The trumpets, too, in the ancient temple service were not mere announcers, but a continuous music; and the trumpets at Jericho continued their regular blowing until the city "fell down flat." **So in the days of the voice of the seventh angel** shall **the mystery** be complete; and forthwith, the judgment day shall reveal it.

7. **When he shall begin to sound** —Rather, *whenever he is about to sound;* whensoever that sounding shall take place, and how long soever it may continue. Alford and other premillennialists deny that ὅταν, **when,** here means *whenever*, and insist that the mystery is finished when the trumpet begins to blow. Which, in the fact, is not true; for the dragon and beast commence their career at that point. That Alford's Greek is at fault Mr. Glasgow clearly shows. Robinson's New Testament Lexicon thus defines Ὅταν: "*When*, with the accessory idea of uncertainty, possibility, *i. q.*, *whensoever, if ever, in case that, so often as.*" On the other hand, ὅτε signifies more strictly *when*, as *when* an actual event truly takes place.

We render the oath as follows: *That there should be delay no further, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, whenever he is about to sound, the mystery of God shall have been finished.* The antithesis lies between the further delay, and the closing with the close of the trumpet period.

The purpose of the oath is to express, not the *immediacy* of the second advent, but its *surety.* The absolute justice demanded by the seven thunders, however slow, is certain. This slowness appears in the deliberate phrases **in the days,** *whenever*, and μελλει, *is about to*, wrongly translated **shall begin.** Yet sure as that trumpet shall sound it shall be followed by no delay, for the **mystery** is closed, and the case is made up for final judgment. **Mystery of God** — In his plan of retribution to the righteous and the wicked. Perhaps there is a slight reference to the **mystery** as uttered by the seven thunders and sealed up by divine command, as above recorded. **Prophets** — The *mysteries* of divine judgment are the burden of prophecy from Enoch to John.

3. The third prophetic commission bestowed on St. John, 8-11.

8. The object of the appearance of the commissioning **angel** to John now becomes apparent. It is to give him HIS THIRD COMMISSION to unfold to the world the prophetic *volumen* which the angel's utterances have indicated. **The voice which I heard,** in verse 4. **Go**—The seer is standing on the plane of vision, note v, 14; the angel's feet are on the lower ground of earth and sea. It might be easy for him to move

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, [m] Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. **10** And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; [n] and it was in my mouth

m Jer. 15. 16; Ezek. 2. 8; 3. 1-3.—*n* Ezek. 3. 3.—*o* Ezek. 2. 10.

to the level of the angel's hand, and take **the little book.**

9. **Eat it up**—Receive it within thee, and assimilate within and to thyself. Be impregnated with the prophetic power, as the great final seer of the New Testament.

10. **In my mouth sweet**—Since it is **sweet** to possess the prophetic gift in the **mouth. In my belly bitter**—From the bitterness of the scenes and events which the prophetic gift discloses in the future. Gratifying and honourable was the prophetic office; painful and trying its exercise among men.

11. **He said**—Alford prefers the reading *they say:* the meaning is the same. The direction, as in ver. 8, was divine. And the plural divine Unanimity from which John receives the commission seems to confirm the thought that it comes from the Trinitarian Unity. **Again**—As over against the entire previous apocalypse. He had, instrumentally, prophesied through the seven-church cycle, the seven-seal cycle, and six of the trumpet-cycle. But so all-comprehending is this SEVENTH TRUMPET that a fresh order is given to commence **again. Before**—See note on xxii, 16. The grandeur of the audience **before** which he was to prophesy is now unfolded. Not in person, but in the record, he is to be a world-wide and world-long prophet. **Many peoples**—That prophecy should be heard among **many** unorganized **peoples**; be accepted by many organized and powerful **nations**; be translated into many **tongues**; and rule in power over many **kings.** And the number *four* expresses the earth-wide extent of his prophetic office. How wonderfully

sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, [o] my belly was bitter. **11** And he said unto me, [p] Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

CHAPTER XI.

AND there was given me [a]

p Jer. 1. 9, 10; 25. 15, 30.—*a* Ezek. 40. 3, &c.; Zech. 2. 1; chap. 21. 15.

have the terms of this commission been fulfilled! For it is plain that the prophecy refers not to oral utterance, but to the written record which the seer was now in the process of preparing. And wonderful is the fulfilment of this four-fold extension, in the spreading of this prophecy in our own day to the four great quarters of the globe.

CHAPTER XI.

I. PRELUDE TO THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.

4. Outlined ground-plan of the events of the Seventh Trumpet; that is, of the whole of xii-xxii, 5, 1-13.

a. *The mystic Jerusalem = the pure Church, ascertained by measurement,* 1, 2.

This chapter has been considered the very "cross of interpreters," so various have been the interpretations. But a careful noting of its various points will, perhaps, clearly show that it is *a miniature picture of the great antichristic* STRUGGLE *of which all of chapters* xii–xx *are the full portraiture.* It is the preparatory programme—the portico to the building, and a small model of its structure.

To discover this we note, first, in ver. 7, an anticipation of the full portraiture of the struggle in **the beast,** who can be no other than **the beast** of xiii, 1–10. Then, in verse 2, we have **the holy city,** or Christic capital, in contrast with **the great city,** or Babylon, the antichristic capital. We have then a clew of the great coming antithesis. A full tracing thence of the particulars, as we will give them in our notes, will make, perhaps, perfectly clear the fact that all the

reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, [b]Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

[b] Num. 23. 18. — [c] Ezek. 40. 17, 20.

leading points given at length in the full prophecy of xii–xx will be found to have their correspondent points in this miniature. See tabulation at end of verse 13.

1. **There was given me**—By what giver is not said, (as in vi, 11 and viii, 2;) doubtless by an invisible yet divine donor, the gift coming visibly as by panoramic spontaneous movement. **A reed**—The light-jointed plant that grows in marshy grounds. It was an emblem of feebleness, (Matt. xi, 7;) used as a mock sceptre for Jesus, (Matt. xxvii, 29, 30;) as an instrument for writing by our John himself. 3 John 13. **A rod**—A *staff* for walking; or a **rod** for chastising; or, probably, here, a sceptre or baton of office, as Aaron's **rod.** Heb. i, 8; Rev. ii, 27; Psa. ii, 9. This fragile **reed,** the emblem of a humble Christianity, was yet a *sceptre* mighty to take a divine *measurement* of human things. That measurement could be either, as here, severe and critical, or, as in xxi, 15, an appreciation of **a** glorious wonder. **And the angel stood**—These words are to be rejected as a false reading. **The angel** disappears at the close of the last chapter, and the scene changes.

Before the seer appear, (note iv, 11,) in gradual development, **the temple** or holy house; **the altar** of incense, which was in it; then **the court,** which surrounded it; and, finally, the **city,** which embraced the whole. The main progress is from the less in size to the greater, but from the greater in sacred importance to the less. **Measure**—Take a divine and critical estimate of its present value and amount. **Saying**—In the Greek (omitting **the angel**) there is no immediate subject-noun with which this **saying** agrees, save **rod.** And some, as Wordsworth, have accordingly made the **rod** utter the direction and predictions which follow, just as the altar speaks in chapter ix, 13. But even then the **saying,** no

2 But [c]the court which is without the temple [1]leave out, and measure it not; [d]for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall

1 Gr. *cast out.*—[d] Psa. 79. 1; Luke 21. 24.

doubt, refers to the invisible giver of the **rod.** The **saying** embraces the predictions, in future tense, to verse 10; and then, at verse 11, the seer commences his past tense, yet so commences as, with exquisite skill, to take in the predictions as part of the narrative. The whole could be read in the past tense as one narration. **Rise**—Not as if he had been sitting or kneeling, but as moving him to action from the reverie during which the change of scene had taken place. **Temple . . . altar**—The inmost places of the true Church of God. **Them that worship**—The true living Church of the saints. The measurement is an authentication of their trueness. The authoritative **rod,** or sceptre, is also **a reed,** or pen, that writes a divine endorsement. Happy the Church whom the measuring **reed** endorses.

2. **The court**—The enclosure, or yard, in which the holy **temple** stands. **Measure it not**—For, though formerly the true Church, it is not now the pure Church, but the apostate. Rev. xi, 2. **Is given**—By divine judgment on account of apostasy. **Unto the Gentiles**—For in the apocalypse Israel is the Christic Church, and **the Gentiles** are antichristic. **The holy city**—Same as **the beloved city** of xx, 9, of which **the holy city** of Matt. xxvii, 53 is typical.

And here we may notice the futility of the argument drawn from this phrase to prove that the literal Jerusalem was still standing. It might just as well be argued that **the great city** of verse 8—that is, the literal old Babylon, the type of antichrist's capital—was still standing. It might even be argued, just as reasonably, that **the beloved city** of xx, 9 was standing at the time of John's vision. **Tread under foot**—In ancient times cities were often built at the base around some high, steep hill, on the summit of which a citadel or strong fort was

they [e] tread under foot [f] forty *and* two months. **3** And [2] I will give *power* unto my two [g] witnesses, [h] and they shall prophesy [i] a thousand

[e] Dan. 8. 10. — [f] Chap. 13. 5. — [2] Or, *I will give unto my two witnesses that they may prophesy.* — [g] Ch. 20. 4. — [h] Ch. 19. 10. — [i] Ch. 12. 6. *k* Psa. 52. 8; Jer. 11. 16; Zech. 4. 3, 11, 14.

two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. **4** These are the [k] two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the

built. So Athens was built upon the plain surrounding the Acropolis. When the city was attacked in war this citadel furnished the last stronghold for the defenders. The lower city might be trodden **under foot** by the besiegers, while the citizen soldier firmly held the summit. See note on xx, 9. So here, they **that worship** held **the temple,** while **the Gentiles** trod the city **under foot.** Few, but faithful, the heroes of **the holy** Church held the fort during the siege. **Forty and two months**—A tolerably long siege for a literal citadel to endure. It is typical of the period when the powers of antichrist **tread** down the capital of Christ's kingdom. The symbol appears to be based upon our Lord's words in Luke xxi, 24. For the **forty-two months** see our Introduction on numbers of the apocalypse, and note on xiii, 5.

We have now (3–12) the typical picture of heroic Christian martyrdom during the period of apostasy. Even in the midst of the gentilized **city** there are **two** unterrified yet dying **witnesses.** Their number, **two,** is based on the duality of ministry and church. Yet they are miniatured, or diminished, as **two,** to signalize their faithfulness and to centralize our sympathy on their heroic loneliness in the midst of apostate surroundings. Deep and glorious is the lesson for the faithful witnesses of the truth amid ages of darkness.

b. *The martyr two witnesses=the faithful few,* 3–6.

3. **Give power**—It was to be expected that in the midst of **Gentiles** these **witnesses** would hush in silence. Their enemies are thousands, and they are but **two.** But they have the "gift of **power,**" and their **prophecy** will ring through **the streets** of the city through the whole long, dark period. **My**—The word implies that the speaker is God, and that these **witnesses** are claimed as his own. See note ver. 1. Hence this word is incorrectly quoted by Düsterdieck as an instance in which an angel abruptly speaks the words of God as his own, as a precedent for such an interpretation of xxii, 10, where see note. **Prophesy** — All true preaching is *prophecy,* for it predicts man's future destiny, and comes from a divine **power.** The whole gospel is a solemn prophecy. **Clothed in sackcloth**—An emblematic garb, symbolizing humiliation and grief, especially of the repentant kind. Hence it was worn by the prophets who preached repentance to a guilty generation. The garment represented the humiliation which the sins of the age required. It was usually made of coarse hair, and used for sacks, and also for straining out liquids. Elijah and John the Baptist wore sackcloth. 2 Kings i, 8.

4. **Two candlesticks** — The **candlestick,** in this book, uniformly represents a church, and **the olive trees** which supply the oil naturally represent the ministry. Hence the **witnesses,** as the impersonation of these two bodies, are **two.** Nothing is more common than the impersonating a collective body in an individual. In this book a nation is a beast, a corrupt church is a harlot. A testifying church and a testifying ministry are **two witnesses.**

The imagery is based, with free modifications, upon Zech. iv, 2–13 The prophet there sees two candlesticks, (or rather lamps,) into which two olive trees are pouring, through pipes, their golden oil. And these are there said to represent "the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." These two are Joshua, representing the priesthood, and Zerubbabel, representing the nation. **Before the God . . . earth—**

God of the earth. **5** And if any man will hurt them, [l] fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: [m] and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. **6** These [n] have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and [o] have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. **7** And when they [p] shall have finished their testimony, [q] the beast that ascendeth [r] out of the bottom-

[l] 2 Kings 1. 10, 12; Jer. 1. 10; 5. 14; Ezek. 43. 3; Hos. 6. 5. — [m] Num. 16. 29. — [n] 1 Kings 17. 1; Jas. 5. 16, 17. — [o] Exod. 7. 19. — [p] Luke 13. 32. — [q] Chap. 13. 1, 11; 17. 8. — [r] Chap. 9. 2.

Like prime-ministers before their divine Sovereign.

5. **And**—The imagery of these two verses seems to be based upon the history of Elijah. **Will**—Rather, *wills*, or purposes to. **Fire**—In 2 Kings i, **10, 12, fire** came down from heaven, yet at the words of Elijah's **mouth.** The powerful physical images under which the divine judgments following the rejected ministries of the evangelic **witnesses** need not perplex us. Physical miracles of far more gigantic figure are ascribed to the dragon xii, 4, and to the beast xiii, 13–15. When even so sober a commentator as Alford is in profound doubt whether these two witnesses are not two literal men, who will in the future perform these physical miracles, and go through a martyrdom and miraculous resurrection after three days and a half, we are at once amazed and amused. Why not make the beast a real animal and his image a real automaton, by which physical miracles are wrought?

The sacred thought that underlies these physical images is easily disclosed by the ordinary laws of analogy. The **fire** that **proceedeth out of** the **mouth** of the evangelical prophet is forked. That is, it is alternative in its power; it must burn up the man's sins or burn up his soul. He who *hurts* the prophets, by damaging the truth he represents, is devoured by that **fire.** It is the man, and not the sin, that dies. That the wages of rejecting the truth is death is so immutable a law that the speaker gives it an emphatically-repeated utterance.

6. As the individual judgment upon rejection of the gospel prophecy is given in verse 5, so now we have the *public* judgments. The firmament of God's goodness becomes brass, and the genial showers of mercy descend not. **Waters . . . blood** — Nay, the very mercies of God, designed for our life and happiness, are transformed, by the divine judgments, to the very image and essence of curse. The very gospel, the water of life, proves to be the stream of death. **As often as they will**—Which **will**, since they are but the embodiments of divine truth, is simply the expression of God's law. This absoluteness of their power of inflicting judgments is the absoluteness of the divine justice, not of their personal caprice. And all their power of infliction is simply the power of annunciation, sure to be fulfilled by the divine power. It was thus that Elijah burned up the fifties; and thus that Peter struck Ananias dead. It is thus that the Christian prophet, in the true performance of his duties, slays men and nations. His word kills, because God within the word kills, according to the word. What kills all men is just this word, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

c. *Their destruction by the beast, and resurrection triumph and avenging*, 7–12.

7. **When they**—The martyr witnesses of the apostate period. **Shall . . . finished** — Both individually and collectively. Each individual finishes his testimony and is slain. But, collectively, the entire body represented by the **two** is slain when the period is completed. The individual death of the **two** represents or symbolizes the collective death, in series, of the whole. If **two** represent the whole, then their martyrdom represents the martyrdom of the whole. **The beast** —Premonition of the **beast** of xiii, 11–18. And the **two witnesses** answer to the "killed" of verse 15

less pit [s]shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. **8** And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of [t]the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, [u]where also our Lord was crucified. **9** [v]And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, [w]and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

[s] Dan. 7. 21; Zech. 14. 2.—[t] Chap. 14. 8; 17. 1, 5; 18. 10.—[u] Heb. 13. 12; chap. 18. 24.—[v] Chap. 17. 15.

10 [x]And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, [y]and shall send gifts one to another; [z]because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. **11** [a]And after three days and a half [b]the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. **12** And they heard a great voice from heaven

[w] Psa. 79. 2, 3.—[x] Chap. 12. 12; 13. 8.—[y] Est. 9. 19, 22.—[z] Chap. 16. 10.—[a] Verse 9.—[b] Ezek. 37. 5, 9, 10, 14.

And their martyrdom is type of the collective martyrdoms of the true **witnesses** through the whole period.

8. **The great city**—In opposition **to the holy city** of verse 2; and so identical with the Babylon of xiv, 9, the antichristic capital. **Lie in the street**—Picture of most dishonouring exposure. The defeat of the reformation is in its hour of defeat the object of derision through all the ranks of the apostasy. **Spiritually called**—The word figurative is the opposite to literal, and the word *spiritual*, as an epithet for language, is opposed to *secular*. Secularly **the great city** is called Babylon, but in the dialect of the spirit it is a **Sodom,** an **Egypt.** Babylon is called **Sodom** as the seat of licentiousness, whose end was to be burned. Chap. xix, 3, compared with Gen. xix, 28. And is called **Egypt,** as the cruel oppressor of God's people, from which they were called to **come out,** xviii, 4. **Where...crucified**—Stuart, Gebhardt, and others, consider this clause as demonstrating that Jerusalem is **the great city.** But, 1. All the references to Jerusalem in the Apocalypse make her a symbol of the holy. She is "the city of God," iii, 12; "the holy city," verse 2; the "beloved city," xx, 9; the "holy city," xxii, 19. And so, also, the Jews and Israel are throughout a type of the true Church. 2. On the other hand, in every case the "great city" is Babylon, xiv, 8; xvii, 18; xviii, 16; see also, xvi, 19; xviii, 10; xviii, 19. So uniform a use, in both cases, cannot but be decisive.

3. **Our Lord was** truly **crucified,** not indeed in the literal and local, but in the mystical or spiritual, "Babylon." Literal and fallen Jerusalem was within the limits, and part of, that Babylon, as being part of the Roman Empire as belonging to antichrist, and as where Roman hands **crucified** the Saviour. The **also** implies that our Lord's being **crucified** is viewed as a martyrdom *in addition to* that of the saints slain in the **great city.**

9. **Three days and an half**—A miniature of the **forty and two months,** or three years and a half of verse 2; being "a day for a year." It is an adverse number, the sacred seven broken into two equal parts. The reduction to a miniature amount, corresponds both to the miniature reduction of the **witnesses** to **two,** and to the necessary brevity of time for a corpse to lie unburied.

10. **Send gifts**—As if the day of their death were a festival, a Christmas, or a new-year, when presents are made among friends. **Tormented**—Tired, perplexed, or harassed them with a testimony against their sins and dogmas.

11. **Spirit,** or breath **of life;** said to be **from God,** as miraculously descending into their bodies, and producing resurrection. **Fear**—A deep and awful transformation of their joy into terror. And the terror of the persecutors was the triumph of the martyrs.

12. **Great voice from heaven**—**Life from God** gave them their resur-

saying unto them, Come up hither. [c] And they ascended up to heaven [d] in a cloud; [e] and their enemies beheld them. **13** And the same hour [f] was there a great earthquake, [g] and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain [3] of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, [h] and gave glory to the God of heaven.

c Isa. 14. 13; chap. 12. 5.—*d* Isa. 60. 8; Acts 1. 9.—*e* 2 Kings 2. 1, 5, 7.—*f* Chap. 6. 12.

g Chap. 16. 19.—3 Gr. *names of men;* chap. 3. 4.—*h* Josh. 7. 19; chap. 14. 7; 15. 4.

rection; a **voice** from God their ascension. **Hither**—Into the presence of God, the highest firmament, the most excellent glory. Note, iv. 11. **In a cloud**—Rather in *the* **cloud**, the airy region of vapour and dimness. **Enemies beheld them**—As crowned with divine approbation and rising in triumph to the blessed abodes.

Alford remarks that "no attempt has been made to explain this ascension by those who interpret the witness figuratively of the Old and New Testament," as Wordsworth, or as "calling up to political ascendency and power." We think the figurative "explanation" not only easy and natural in the "attempt," but in the accomplishment. The imagery, like that in verse 5, is borrowed from the history of Elijah; whose ascension, like that of these **witnesses,** was a divine token of endorsement and triumph. It thence stands in perfect analogy with the ascension of the man-child, who mounts to the throne to rule in ever-completing triumph and power over his adversaries, ultimately to put them all under his feet. Note xii, 5. It is, then, correspondent to the triumphant reign of souls in xx, 4, the millennium which takes place in consequence of the victory of the warrior-king Messiah over antichrist, in xix, 11–21. It is true, that the reign of these two martyrs is in glorified bodies rather than in disembodied **souls;** but that arises from the parallelism with Enoch and Elijah, and is not to be held literally. Their ascension is simply the *figure* of the triumph and overruling power of the cause for which they suffered. And this correspondence with the reign of martyred "souls," be it specially noted, is part of the outlined identity of this chapter with the entire predictive history of all that follows in the book.

13. **Earthquake**—Anticipative image, in miniature, of the overthrow of Babylon, completed at close of chapter xix. **Tenth part...seven thousand**—Says Gebhardt, "A city, the tenth part of which is destroyed by an earthquake which slays 7,000 persons, can only be a real city," that is, not a symbolical city. But the very exactitude of the round numbers ought to have warned the commentator of numerical symbol. No earthquake ever carefully smote down a city to the precise **tenth part;** so also, that the number of men slain was the cube of **ten** multiplied by **seven.** And by Gebhardt's interpretation this ought to have been the literal fact with the literal Jerusalem. The writer who has not carefully studied the symbolical numbers of the Apocalypse will never attain its true interpretation.

If *ten* is a symbol of universality, then *one tenth* indicates that but a minority of the secular dominions of the earth will be plunged into absolute destruction in the great closing contest. As to the number of the **slain men,** the cube of **ten** raises our thoughts to a great number, yet limited by the divine **seven.** The universality of the *ten* refers to their universal diffusion through the secular world. All these limitations correspond with the fact, that in the final battle, while the destruction is great, yet the survivors are in still greater numbers, consisting of "the nations" of xix, 15, xx, 3, 8, who still remain undestroyed and roll on their generations. **Affrighted**—Were filled with salutary fear resulting in their conversion and entrance into the millennial age of xx, 1–6. **Gave glory**—From fear to praise. **The God of heaven**—Whose **spirit of life** awakened the witnesses to a resurrection, and whose **great voice** bid them **come**

14 [i]The second woe is past; *and,* behold, the third woe cometh quickly. **15** And [k]the seventh angel sounded; [l]and there were great voices in heaven, saying, [m]The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; [n]and he shall reign for ever and ever. **16** And [o]the four and twenty elders, which

i Chap. 8. 13; 9. 12; 15. 1.—*k* Chap. 10. 7.—*l* Isa. 27. 13; chap. 16. 17; 19. 6.—*m* Chap. 12. 10.—*n* Dan. 2. 44; 7. 14, 18, 27.—*o* Chap. 4. 4; 5. 8; 19. 4.

by ascension into **heaven.** It may be rather hinted than explicitly narrated; yet all this hint is a fair miniature of what in chapters xix and xx is a full portraiture. And we trust we have made it clear to our readers that this passage (1–13) is an outline sketch of the victorious struggle of Christ with antichrist, of which the coming chapters are prophetic history.

The correspondences of the two appear in the following TABULATION:—

The temple, the true Church.	=	The mystical temple and Jerusalem, xiv–xvi.
The beast.	=	The beast, xiii, 1.
The two persecuted witnesses.	=	The saints persecuted by the beast, xiii, 7, 16, 17.
Slain three days and a half.	=	Martyred three and a half years, or 1260 days, xiii, 5.
Resurrection of witnesses.	=	Reign of souls of martyrs, xx, 4.
Overthrow of city.	=	Downfall of Babylon, xvi, 19–21.
"Remainder gave glory to God."	=	Millennial triumphs, xx, 3, 4.

II. THE SEVENTH (*third Woe*) TRUMPET SOUNDS; WARS OF CHRIST AND ANTICHRIST, 14.

14. **The second woe**—The three **woes**, announced in viii, 13, are the last **three** of the **seven** judgments of the seven trumpets. **Quickly**—By a rapid movement of the apocalyptic panorama, symbolizing that the fulfilment comes with a divine rapidity.

The seventh trumpet covers the entire period of consecutive historic prophecy of the book. It forms with its Angelophany and new prophetic inauguration in chap. x, and its outline and prelude in this eleventh chapter, the entire Third Part of the book. It most properly opens with the present solemn announcements in heaven and earth. The true, clear, divine story is now to be told.

Heavenly voices chant a triumphal anticipation of its contents, 15-19.

15. **Great voices in heaven**—Alford suggests that these **voices** were from the four living beings as distinguished from the twenty-four elders." But that destroys the mysterious beauty of the apostle's thought, which is, that the **voices** rolled and reverberated spontaneously through the heavens with no apparent utterer. They were as if the celestial spaces spake them. **Kingdoms**—The preferable reading seems to be *kingdom*, in the singular, of course including the italic repetition of the word inserted by the translators. The world's kingdom, no longer the devil's kingdom, has become God's and his Christ's kingdom.

Throughout this lofty prelude, the consummation of the entire events of the seventh trumpet is announced as *already completed.* The utterers take their mental stand-point at the end of the whole history, and contemplate its future completion as already past. This is the prophetic future-preterite; the past tense for the future.

The sounding of the trumpet is of course the signal for the panorama of symbols to move on. The announcement of the heavenly **voices** utters in one sentence the glorious result of the whole movement, and is the signal for the profound worship and thanksgiving of **the elders** which follow.

16. **Elders**—Representatives of the

sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, **17** Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, [p] which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, [q] and hast reigned. **18** [r] And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, [s] and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, [t] small and great; [u] and shouldest destroy them which [4] destroy the earth. **19** And [v] the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and [w] there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, [x] and great hail.

[p] Chap. 1. 4, 8; 4. 8; 16. 5.—[q] Chap. 19. 6.—[r] Verses 2, 9.—[s] Dan. 7. 9, 10; chap. 6. 10.—[t] Chap. 19. 5.

[u] Chapter 13. 10; 18. 6.—4 Or, *corrupt.*—[v] Chapter 15. 5, 8.—[w] Chapter 8. 5; 16. 18.—[x] Chapter 16. 21.

CHAPTER XII.

AND there appeared a great won-

universal Church in heaven and earth. Notes on vi, 4. **Their faces**—First rising and then prostrating **before God;** not even lifting up the face. So profound and so *one* is their thanksgiving over this sure consummation. The heart of the whole Church of God feels the inexpressible joy of this grand certainty, that the dark problem of the world is solved in the final triumph of good.

17. **Hast taken...hast reigned**—That is, will *take* and will *reign* (future-preterite) in the period signalized by the peal of this seventh trumpet. So glad is the prospect, so sure the final accomplishment, that the spirit of the utterers is transported to the close, and contemplates the battle as already fought and the glorious crown as already won and worn.

18. **Nations were angry**—On the side of antichrist they will rally in arms against God and the Lamb. **Wrath is come**—In the terrible carnage of xix, 11–21, and the fire from heaven of xx, 9. **Judged**—Chapter xx, 11.

19. To this divine ascription there is given from God a divine response, not uttered to the ear, but shown to the eye. **The temple** (see note iv, 11) is the same as in verse 2, but not as same symbol. It here stands, as in xv, 5, (see note,) for the literal **temple,** and in the holiest of that temple is **the testament**—divine *covenant*—by which God pledges himself to his people for the final triumph of good in glory. In answer to the predictive thanksgiving of **the elders'** worship, God displays that *covenant.* He answers not a word, he only shows his pledge; as much as to say, "You see that MYSELF am bound for the consummation you predict." **Lightnings...hail**—All the most powerful elements of nature pour forth their celebration over this pledge of the final glorification of nature with man.

The panorama moves on, and the two great princes of good and of evil appear in antithesis. This is the beginning of the scenic war.

CHAPTER XII.

PERSONALITIES OF THE ANTICHRISTIC WAR, xii–xiii, 18.

Satanic dragon and man child Christ, 1-6.

1. **And**—In the opening of this chapter three representative beings appear on the scene. The **man child,** Christ; the mother; and the **dragon,** ready to devour the child. The grouping at once suggests the source whence the symbolism is drawn. We at once think of the virgin mother, the infant Jesus, and the murderous Herod. Yet the subsequent **wilderness** history of **the woman** shows that the virgin is here introduced as a symbol of the Church; that as Herod is not actually named, the **dragon** is truly the literal Satan, and that the **man child** is truly

der[1] in heaven; a woman clothed with the [a]sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And

1 Or, *sign.*

a Isa. 60. 19, 20; Mal. 4. 2.

Christ. Yet the habiliments of the **dragon** show that he is Satan as representative of pagan Roman antichrist, and the **man child** is Christ as representative leader in the battle against antichrist. As the woman is symbol, and the Herod is symbol, so the man child is here symbol. Alford is right in insisting that "the man child is the Lord Jesus Christ and none other," (not Constantine, nor any other Roman emperor;) but he is wrong in ignoring the plain fact, that both Christ and the dragon are here representatives of Christianity and paganism in the Roman world; that the battle here is truly between the two great causes, and that the overthrow of the dragon is the downfall of paganism.

As the beast of xiii, 1, is the specific antichrist of the New Testament, according to the apocalypse, so Gebhardt holds the *dragon* to be rather anti-god. This may in due degree be admitted. The paganism of the Old Testament, and even as it laps over into the New, is opposed not so much to Christ as to God. It supplies a rival, and denies the true divine existence. Yet, by another view, as Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Dispensation, so the anti-god is, through all ages, the lineal antichrist. See introductory note to 2 Thess., chap. ii. We might, then, (and some of our readers may prefer the view,) reckon the contest with the dragon as part of the coming antichristic war, and so reckon four rather than three "overthrows of antichrist." Yet as the man child and the dragon are here presented as the two powers which, after this antecedent contest, are reserved in the background as the source, inspiration, and controllers of the manifest war, we prefer to consider this contest as *preludial*, introduced to show the genesis of the main war and to authenticate the personalities introduced in the next chapter as the combatants; thereby leaving but three main "overthrows." **There appeared**—From the symbolic **heaven,** where the panorama was in action, the seer looks upward to a higher ethereal region, the atmospheric **heaven,** where the **woman,** and subsequently the **dragon,** appear; yet higher still, the third **heaven,** is the **throne** whither the **child was caught up.** Note iv, 11. **Wonder**—Rather, sign, token, symbol, a phenomenon significant of some idea. So 1 Cor. xiv, 22; Matt. xii, 39; Matt. xxiv, 3. **Sun**—In the gorgeous imagery investing the **woman** is truly to be seen a recognition of the unparalleled honour of the blessed virgin in becoming the mother of the Incarnate. Sad as is the error of the Romanistic adoration of her person, no reaction of thought should prevent our recognising the due honour which Scripture pays her. And one honour is, that she is clearly here the basis of the symbol of the Church in its struggle with paganism. Note on Matt. i, 18.

There is an apparent incongruity in the Church's being here the mother of Christ and also, hereafter, the bride of Christ. But the two are to be separated in thought as different symbols. The maternal symbol of the Church is a specialty, terminating at a particular historic point. The bridal symbol comes from another region of thought, and extends into the final glorification. **Clothed with the sun**—"Invested," Newton well says, "with the rays of the sun of righteousness." **The moon**—The symbol of sublunary change, over and upon which the ideal Church stands exalted. **Crown of twelve stars**—The twelve apostles, under whom she stands as the apostolic Church. The three orders of heavenly luminaries combine to do her homage. Robed with the **sun,** and crowned with the **stars,** she stands on the **moon**—her silver pedestal. While each of these investments may have its symbolic import, the clustering of the whole is to render glorious the personified Church. The dragon, on the contrary, in a different hemisphere of the firmament, is clothed in no such

she being with child cried, [b] travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. **3** And there appeared another [2] wonder in heaven; and behold [c] a great red dragon, [d] having seven heads and ten horns, [e] and seven crowns upon his heads. **4** And [f] his tail drew the third part [g] of the stars of heaven, [h] and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood [i] before the woman which was ready to be delivered, [k] for to devour her child as soon as it was born. **5** And she brought forth a man child, [l] who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and *to* his throne. **6** And [m] the

b Isa. 66. 7; Gal. 4. 19.——2 Or, *sign*.——*c* Chap. 17. 3.——*d* Chap. 17. 9, 10.——*e* Chap. 13. 1.——*f* Chap. 9. 10, 19.

g Chap. 17. 18.——*h* Dan. 8. 10.——*i* Verse 2.——*k* Exod. 1. 16.——*l* Psalm 2. 9; chap. 2. 27; 19. 15.——*m* Verse 4.

glory, but equipped with symbols of power and fierceness.

2. **Cried**—Even in her celestial exaltation the **woman** is writhing in womanly agony. Type of how divine a thing is human maternity! Science may find in it but an animal process of "evolution;" but as the incarnation showed what divinity there is in humanity, so the maternity of the incarnate shows what a divine type is stamped upon human birth.

3. **Dragon**—Name and shape allude to the Edenic serpent. With this primitive serpent the present dragon is very expressly identified in verse 9, and again re-identified in xx, 2. He is the personal Satan, ver. 9, arrayed in the skin of the Roman empire. So Rome's great predecessor, Egypt, Ezek. xxix, 3, is a dragon: "I am against thee, Pharaoh, the great dragon that liest in the midst of its rivers." Probably the physical reference is to the crocodile. In the second and third centuries of our era the *dragon* was adopted as a Roman ensign, and is thus described by Ammianus Marcellinus: "The dragon was covered with purple cloth, and fastened to the end of a pike gilt and adorned with precious stones. It opened its wide throat, and the wind blew through it; and it hissed, as if in a rage, with its tail floating in several folds through the air."—*Elliott.* **Red**—Fire-coloured, not blood-coloured; yet indicating both his slaughterous character and his hellish origin. The **seven heads** subsequently referred, physically, to the seven hills of Rome, (xvii, 9,) and politically to the seven great empires of which Rome is the sixth and seventh. Notes xvii, 10. It is clear that the **dragon** is here symbol of Roman paganism, as the **woman** is symbol of the Christianity that paganism would destroy. The **ten horns** refer, perhaps, basally, to the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire immediately fell, analogous to the ten toes of Daniel's image, and ultimately to the universality of modern nations. Notes xvii, 12–14. It is a remarkable inconsistency in Alford that he admits the symbolism of the **woman** as the Christian Church, and yet ignores that of her antagonist, the **dragon,** as heading the antichurch of antichrist. And yet it is notable how antithetically our seer places before us the two in position in verses 1–4, before he proceeds to narrate the action.

4. **Third part of the stars**—Allusively based on the history of the fallen angels, and given here to magnify the dragon's power.

5. **Rule...iron**—A prediction taken from Psa. ii, 9, and vividly quoted as fulfilled in Rev. xix, 15. **Caught up... throne**—The resurrection, as well as the birth, is given not as literal history, but as the basis of symbol. The infant Jesus is exalted to the divine throne to symbolize that infant Christianity is to triumph, not only over paganism, but over all other opposing powers. In his note on Acts i, 1, 2, Alford has beautifully shown (see our note there) that Christ's ascension was an exaltation to rule as Head of the Church and Lord of the world. And the representative character herein of the **man child** is verified by Rev. ii, 26, 27: "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to

woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there [n]a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.

7 And there was war in heaven: [o]Michael and his angels fought [p]against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, **8** And prevailed not; neither was [q]their place found any more in heaven. **9** And [r]the great dragon was cast out, [s]that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, [t]which deceiveth the whole world: [u]he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. **10** And I heard a loud voice saying in heav-

[n] Chapter 11. 3. — [o] Dan. 10. 13, 21; 12. 1. — [p] Verse 3; chapter 20. 2. — [q] Job 7. 10; Psalm 37. 10; Jude 6.

[r] Luke 10. 18; John 12. 31. — [s] Genesis 3. 1, 4; chapter 20. 2. — [t] Chapter 20. 3. — [u] Chapter 9. 1.

him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." While it is extreme for Elliott or Newton to identify the **man child** as being Constantine, it is not too much to say that according to this promise the **man child** on the divine **throne** does represent the triumph of Christianity over Roman paganism, in which Constantine was a principal figure. And thus the symbolic exaltation of the **man child,** of the two witnesses, and of the emparadised "souls" of Rev. xx, 4, all signify the same thing—namely, the victory of the cause by them represented.

6. **Fled into the wilderness**—Commentators think that this is said in anticipation of verse 14; but the time-periods in both verses are not precisely identical. This verse tells what became of the woman while the firmamental fight lasts; verse 14 tells what, after the dragon's fall. The two flights seem to be somewhat different. In this she fearfully *flees;* in ver. 14 she is eagle-winged and *flies.* Note ver. 14.

2. Firmamental war—the dragon cast to earth, 7-17.

7 **War in heaven**—These symbols are, doubtless, drawn from the holy tradition so often alluded to in Scripture, that Satan was once a heavenly angel and fell from his first estate. (Jude 6.) The traditional account is, of course, modified to suit the symbolical purpose. **Michael**—Mentioned in Dan. x, 13, 21 and xii, 1, as "one of the chief princes," and champion for the Jewish people against adverse powers. And as in the apocalypse Jerusalem is the Christian Church, and Jews are Christians, so Michael, "the archangel," (Jude 9,) is champion for Christ and Christianity. He is not, as Hengstenberg claims, Christ himself. For in this scene Christ is the **man child** on the **throne,** and overcoming his adversary through "the archangel," the heroic general of his forces. The signification of Michael's name—"Who is like God?"—suggests, not that he is God, but the champion and challenger for God; just as the parody, "Who is like the beast?" is not uttered by the beast himself, but by his admirers. The forces on both sides are **angels.** The dragon's being in the firmamental heaven, means that he was ruling over the Roman world as the impersonation of paganism.

9. **Great dragon was cast out**—As if with exultant feeling the seer reiterates the fact of his expulsion, giving his name in full, and making sure that we know that he is the very ancient **devil.** And when he emerges from his long concealment at xx, 2, he is identified with the same list of titles. **Cast out into the earth**—From being a supreme ruler he is humbled to be an angry, groveling, earthly persecutor. Paganism ceased to be the religion of the Roman empire by the edict of Milan, under Constantine, A. D. 313, and its rites were prohibited by Theodosius the Great, A. D. 392. This was the completed downfall of the pagan dragon.

10. And a similar exultation rings through heaven. **A loud voice**—He

en, [v]Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, [w]which accused them before our God day and night. **11** And [x]they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; [y]and they loved not their lives unto the death. **12** Therefore [z]rejoice, *ye* heavens, and ye that dwell in them. [a]Woe

[v] Chapter 11. 15; 19. 1.—[w] Job 1. 9; 2. 5; Zechariah 3. 1.—[x] Romans 8. 33, 34, 37; 16. 20.—[y] Luke 14. 26.—[z] Psalm 96. 11; Isaiah 49. 13;

to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, [b]because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. **13** And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted [c]the woman which brought forth the man *child*. **14** [d]And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, [e]that she might fly [f]into the wilderness, into her place, where

chapter 18. 20.—[a] Chapter 8. 13; 11. 10.—[b] Chapter 10. 6.—[c] Verse 5.—[d] Exodus 19. 4.—[e] Verse 6.—[f] Chapter 17. 3.

hears the voice but knows not the utterer. Yet apparently it comes from the redeemed spirits of the previous martyrs under pagan supremacy, now in paradise; for Christians on earth are to them **our brethren. Now**—In the glad hour of the pagan dragon's downfall. Sublime is their song even over an incomplete victory; for it is a special instalment of that **salvation, strength, kingdom, power,** which shall be terrenely exhibited in their reign on earth, (xx, 4,) and consummated in xxi, xxii. Thus far the pagan **dragon** had impeded their **power;** he has fallen from **heaven,** but survives, alas, on **earth and sea.** Verse 12. **Accused them**—As Satan did Job. Satan suggested the accusation that Christians who opposed the pagan gods were atheists; charged them with atrocious crimes, and brought terrible persecutions upon them.

11. **They overcame him** — For Michael's victory was their victory; since they are the literal of whom the **woman** was symbol. And this victory on earth Christians won by faith in **the blood of the Lamb,** as well as by their unshrinking **testimony** against the idols and for Christ. **They loved not** (or, as Alford well puts it, they carried their not-love of life) **unto death**—They so persisted in not loving life as to attain martyrdom.

12. **Rejoice, ye heavens** — As if these rejoicing martyr-spirits called for a joyful response from all their co-celestials, human or angelic. **Woe to earth and sea** (as the true reading is) since they are to be the scenes of the bestial war. **Devil is come down**—Paganism in its downfall is full of **wrath,** feeling that it has but a brief period for recovering the supremacy. That ended with the death of the Emperor Julian, A. D. 363.

13. **Persecuted the woman**—We might have expected, that after the dragon's expulsion from heaven the **woman** would be restored to her original place in the sky. That was still her right place; but the influence and power of the dragon, doubtless, it is, which really bring her to the earth until the war is over.

14. **Two wings of a great eagle ... wilderness**—There seems to be a double allusion here: to Israel's sojourn in the wilderness, and to the flight of the blessed mother of Jesus through the same wilderness to Egypt, as driven by Herod. Of the former, Jehovah said to Moses, approaching Sinai, Ex. xix, 4, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." The woman came down from her high place in heaven, but it was on Jehovah's **wings,** in order to be borne to a place of security as well as humiliation. Not that she is carried by the eagle; but the eagle's wings are put on her, and she flies with them of herself, eagle-winged. **That she might fly**—In regard to the flight of the woman into the wilderness we may note, 1. That it was under fear of paganism, even after the pagan dragon was overthrown. Even under the Christianized empire, therefore, there

she is nourished [s] for a time, and

[o] Daniel 7. 25; 12. 7.

was a powerful pagan influence repressive of a pure Christianity. This arose from two sources: First, The remains of pagan principle and practice in the national Church assuming the various forms of Mariolatry, wafer-worship, saint-adoration, pope-worship, and ritual. Second, The paganism of the nations of Northern Europe, who filled the atmosphere of the world with a pagan malaria. 2. The wilderness is at once the repressed power of the Church at home and her difficulty in struggling with the pagan nations of Europe for their conversion. 3. But her flying is mentioned twice, verses 6 and 14. The first is a *fleeing* in fear, and refers to the humble and persecuted, yet spiritually-prospering, obscurity of the Church before the pagan downfall, and in anticipation of her 1260-day period. The second is a divine *flying*, with God-given wings, into the **wilderness,** with a divinely-provided nourishment. This alludes to the missioning of Christianity, especially northward, by which she not only, with obscure perseverance, converted the tribes that settled in Italy, but spread her power through the forests of central and northern Europe. Thus she fled from the dragon in fear; she flew to the wilderness, both spiritual and literal, of Europe with hope; she was divinely sustained, and was helped to prosperity and even victory by the very pagan **earth.** Yet the spirit and power of paganism contrived to overlie the Church, even after these victories, and her wilderness state remained through the "dark ages." Though thus borne on eagles' **wings,** yet her home is **the wilderness.** For Rome is still **Babylon.** Even after a Christian emperor was seated on the throne, a quasi-paganism was still able to struggle for ascendency, and at court a semi-pagan Christianity but too much prevailed. The pure Church, therefore, retired like raven-fed Elijah to the mystic **wilderness. For a time, and times, and half a time**—That is, for a season, (or year,) two seasons, and half a season; that is, three years and a half; or (verse 6) 1260 days. This 1260-day period appears five times in the apocalypse. The origin of this use of this period seems to be found in the famine in Israel in the time of Elijah, which our Lord in Luke iv, 25, and James v, 17, fix at three years and a half. But this could only be an approximation; for a famine neither begins nor ends on an exact day. And similarly, when adopted as a measurement in prophecy, the events will be found in their nature equally gradual in their commencement and termination, and the number must be viewed as simply an approximation. A similar period is adopted by Daniel vii, 25, xii, 7.

times, and half a time, from the

Elliott and others maintain that these five passages in the apocalypse designate the same time and train of events. But plainly two of them (xii, 14, 15) designate the period of the dragon's terrene troubling of the Church, and three of them (xi, 2, 3, xiii, 5) the supremacy of the beast.

This dragon-period is the time after the firmamental overthrow of the dragon in which he oppresses the Church, xii, 13, 17. That is, it includes the time of the power of paganism in and over the Church, after paganism had ceased to rule imperially supreme. And certainly, measuring from the downfall of paganism under the reign of Constantine, we find that an approximate 1260-year period will bring us to the Reformation. And the Reformation was the establishment of an anti-pagan Church. The Roman "beast" still sustained a paganism in his own domain, for his period of domination was yet continuing. But the reformed Church completely expelled paganism from her limits. Christianity became established beyond all danger in the Roman empire about A. D. 325; and in 1588 the defeat of the Spanish armada placed the permanence of the Reformation beyond question. Constantine published the edict of Milan, by which Christianity

face of the serpent. **15** And the serpent [h] cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. **16** And the earth [i] helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. **17** And the dragon was wroth with the woman,[k] and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, [l] which keep the commandments of God, and have [m] the testimony of Jesus Christ.

h Isa. 59. 19.——*i* Exod. 12. 35, 36; 1 Kings 17. 6. ——*k* Gen. 3. 15; chap. 11. 7; 13. 7.

l Chap. 14. 12.——*m* 1 Cor. 2. 1; 1 John 5 10; chap. 1. 2, 9; 6. 9; 20. 4.

was freed from persecution, in 313; and 1260 years bring us to 1573, when Protestantism was in full possession of all those States that became permanently Protestant.

15. **Water as a flood**—It cannot reasonably be denied that the antithetic terms **water** and **earth** are here figurative, as is **the dragon.** Water, as a figure, symbolizes the moving and unstable human populations; and **earth,** the steady and solid human state. The dragon, therefore, pouring from his mouth the **water** upon the woman, must signify paganism pouring a hostile horde upon the Christian communion; and the aid derived from **the earth** must designate the support of Christianity by the settled and civilized people. And so did pagan Europe pour her hosts of barbarians down upon Christianized Italy. And the Christianized **earth** so aided the Church as to secure her triumph over paganism.

16. **Earth ... swallowed up the flood**—Instead of barbarism *swallowing up* civilization, civilization conquered barbarism. Instead of paganism extinguishing Christianity, Christianity converted paganism. The Roman **earth** absorbed the barbarian peoples, and Christianity firmly walked over Europe and transformed it to a Christendom.

17. **Dragon was wroth**—Paganism long maintained an angry and desperate struggle for supremacy. **War with ... seed**—Who maintained the **testimony of Jesus** himself over wafer-worship and Mariolatry during the beast-period.

Düsterdieck denies that the woman is symbol of the Church; maintaining that this whole scene of chapter xii is a picture showing who are the true adversaries of Christ, namely, Satan and his hosts. The woman, he argues, cannot be the Jewish Church, for, besides her apostolic **twelve stars** she laps over into the Christian ages even to the time of Constantine. Nor can she be the Christian Church; for who then are the **remnant of her seed?** To this argument Alford seems to succumb, and accept Düsterdieck's view, and thereby enfeebles and disconcerts his whole scheme of interpretation.

Our answer to Düsterdieck's dilemma is, that the woman is the anti-dragon or anti-pagan Church; **the remnant of her seed** is the anti-bestial or anti-papal Church. The woman, therefore, inclusively represents the ancient Jewish Church, from which Christ sprung, continued into the Christian Church in all its anti-pagan history and character. While the pagan dragon hoped, in his own undisguised person, to conquer her, he fought; but when he saw defeat before him he evoked the sea-beast (chap. xiii) to be his substitute, and through him to war with **the remnant of her seed**—the opponents of the pseudo-Christian beast—until he reappears in his own person, Rev. xx, 1. The Church, **the woman,** is, in successive generations, truly her own seed. The Church of to-day is the Church's **seed,** and the Church of a later day is the **remnant** or *rest* of her **seed.** The **seed** against which paganism warred through the beast were the anti-papal successors to the anti-pagan Church.

We have a striking proof that the dragon was paganism in the opinion of Constantine himself. Eusebius gives us Constantine's words: "That dragon has been expelled from the government of the world by the good providence of the supreme God and my instrumentality." And before the

CHAPTER XIII.

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw [a] a beast rise up out of the sea, [b] having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the [1] name of blasphemy. **2** [c] And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, [d] and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear,

a Dan. 7. 2, 7.—*b* Ch. 12. 3; 17. 3, 9, 12.—1 Or, *names*, ch. 17. 3.—*c* Dan. 7. 6.—*d* Dan. 7. 5.

vestibule of his own palace the emperor placed a cross over his own head, and the dragon beneath, thrust down into the abyss.

CHAPTER XIII.

I. Sea-risen beast—Christianized Roman empire, 1-10.

1. **And**—The Satanic symbol of Roman imperial pagan power has disappeared from its firmamental supremacy over the world, and is now succeeded by the shadow of a new system. **I stood**—The true reading is, doubtless, *he* (the dragon) **stood.** At the last verse the dragon means war; in this he is present, and perhaps superintends the rise of his instrument in the war, the **beast;** in next verse he endows the beast with all his own **power and authority.** The dragon is Satan himself, the real antichrist; the beast is his visible embodiment as representative antichrist. Henceforth the dragon, though real mover of the antichristic war, lurks on earth behind scenes until he reappears personally at xx, 1. See note, ix, 1. Just so the man child remains in heaven until he reappears first in his symbolic person in chap. xix, and then in his own literal person on the great white throne at xx, 11. **The sea**—The **beast** is said in xi, 7 and xvii, 8, to come up from the bottomless pit, or *abyss.* See note, ix, 1. To this "pit" the dragon is consigned before the millennium, xx, 3; and to the "lake of fire" after the millennium. The former must not, therefore, be confounded with the latter. The Greek word for "bottomless pit" appears also in Luke viii, 31; Rom. x, 7. It is the term for the under-world, where biblical thought locates the demoniac and dismal side of hades. There is the "deep" whither the demons dreaded to be sent from out the swine; the fire, where Dives was tormented; the Tartarus, where Peter assigns the first and falling angels; the smoking pit, whence issue our apocalyptist's locustine-demons. From the same under-world or abyss the *beast* is here pictured as coming up through *the sea,* whose depths are based and merged in this same subterranean region. And (xvii, 15) these same "waters" are also said to be symbolically the peoples of the **beast** empire. That is, from the dark, demoniac under-world come up the vapory, shaping influences through the popular world, by which the profane character of this beast empire is formed.

Upon his horns ten crowns—The dragon, as a sole and single monarch, had his **crowns** upon his head; the beast has his **crowns** upon his **horns,** in view of the ten distinct kingdoms which the prediction takes into its scope. And this shows that the Christianized empire is included in the symbol; for *the ten kingdoms did not rise until Rome became Christian.*

The dragon, beast, and the two-horned come each from a different element. The first, from the firmament, where for centuries he has been assuming to rule as usurping god of this world; the second, from the sea, merging in the abyss; the third, from the earth, as a temporary servitor of both **dragon** and **beast.**

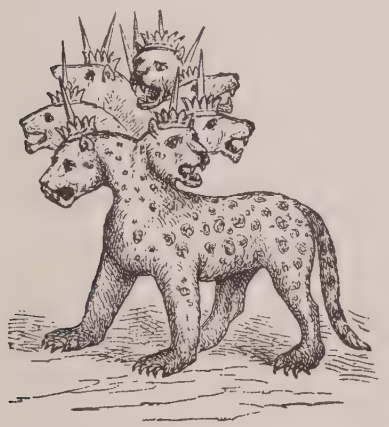
2. **Leopard...bear...lion**—The first three beasts in Daniel's vision, (Dan. vii;) here given in reverse order as tracing them backward. Hence this beast, while identical with Daniel's fourth beast, takes in all the previous three. Nay, its seven heads go still farther back, xvii, 10. **Horns** were observed by the primitive races of men to be not only the outgrowth of the strength of the animal that bore them, but also his instrument of defense, power, and supremacy; and so

[e] and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and [f] the dragon gave him his power, [g] and his seat, [h] and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads [i] as it were [2] wounded to death; and his deadly wound

e Dan. 7. 4.—*f* Chap. 12. 9.—*g* Chap. 16. 10.

h Chap. 12. 4.—*i* Verses 12, 14.—2 Gr. *slain*

horns became the emblem of human power—of a ruler, and even of an empire. "My horn hast thou exalted," said David; Job's horn was defiled in the dust; and Christ is "a horn of salvation," Luke i, 69. Hence, in prophetic symbol a horn is a kingdom, or of a *king*, as embodying a kingdom; never, perhaps, a king as a single individual. In Daniel viii, 5,



Alexander the Great is symbolized as a goat with "one notable horn;" and a horned goat was the national symbol of Macedon. The coins presented the head of Alexander himself as horned. In the apocalypse the ten horns are the ten nations of Europe which arose out of the Roman empire—which had no developed nationalities as yet—which would for awhile identify themselves with the antichristic harlot, and then finally destroy her. See notes on xvii, 10–17.

And as Daniel's beasts are not single kings, but kingdoms, empires, through their whole duration, so of this beast, the seven heads are not single kings, but great historic monarchies. Daniel's golden image, by his own interpretation, with an equal vastness, covers the course of empires; its head, trunk, and limbs standing for individual races. Even the word "kings," in Daniel, means *kingdoms*. See note on xvii, 10. Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar, (ii, 37, 38,) "Thou, O king, art a king of kings . . . after thee shall arise another *kingdom* inferior to *thee*, and another third kingdom." And so in Daniel vii, 17, "These great beasts, which are four, are four *kings;*" and yet further: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom." Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom were one. But as Daniel's development of the course of empires retained no traces of Nebuchadnezzar's personality, so John's prophetic history had nothing to do with the history of Nero or either of the emperors of Rome personally.

Dragon gave him his power—The **dragon** is Satan, the personal antichrist; in the **beast** he wore a new guise. With our notes on this chapter compare our whole comment on 2 Thess. ii, 1–12. The beast became a visible representative antichrist because Satan became its real soul. See note on 2 Thess. ii, 6, 9.

3. **One of his heads as it were wounded**—The head was the Roman head. It was not **wounded** and **healed,** as some suppose, by ceasing to be pagan and becoming Christian under Constantine; for that event is symbolized by the downfall of the dragon. It was **wounded,** or rather *slain*, for so the word imports, by the cessation of the imperial Rome and its revival as papal Rome. The universal emperor expired, and revived in the universal bishop. To the secular empire there succeeded a spiritual empire of far greater extent and power. And that stupendous spiritual Roman empire exists to the present hour. And this cessation and renovation of the ruling power is essentially contemporaneous and identical with the death of ancient Rome under the blows of the northern barbarians,

was healed: and [k] all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and

k Chapter 17. 8.

and the rise of the modern Rome and of the modern system of Europe. On the cessation of the old system a brief interregnum took place, upon which the rule fell into the hands of the Pope of Rome, in whom a new domination became impersonated. **Healed**—Compare with our notes, xvii, 8–11, where the image of the wounded head, afterwards **healed,** becomes the death and resurrection of the **beast.** Stuart, and most rationalistic commentators, apply this to Nero. See our Introduction. Nero was driven from the throne and had committed suicide; but the baser rabble, with whom the bloody despot was popular, cherished the hope that he had escaped, was truly alive, and would yet reascend the throne. On this John is imagined by these commentators to have founded the image that one head of the **beast** received a **deadly wound;** that the **wound** was **healed,** that he shall "ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition." That is, the resurrection of the **beast** is to be identified with Nero's escape and return. And they labor to misdate the writing of the apocalypse to suit this theory. But in point of fact, the idea of a resurrection from the dead by Nero formed no part of the popular notion even of the Roman rabble, at the time of the writing of the apocalypse. All that the historians of the day or the contemporaneous literature say is, that the fancy was current that Nero had escaped, would return, and would take a terrible revenge on Rome. It was not until a later generation, especially of Christians remembering Nero as *the* typical bloody persecutor, identified him with the antichrist, and found him in the apocalypse. Augustine first mentions the idea of his resurrection; and later still, Primasius is the first commentator who connects the idea of a resurrect Nero with the sacred texts.

Gebhardt, admitting this discordance between John's conception of the beast's *resurrection* and the Neronian rumour of a mere *return,* nevertheless maintains that John modifies the rumour to his own purposes. The modification, we reply, is much the largest part of the modified subject. And if the nucleus were a miserable falsity, the modification enlarges it to an enormity. We cheerfully admit that John does often take a nucleus of fact and modify it to his own needs. We may admit that chapter xii abounds in such modifications. But we call attention to the most decisive fact, that *every nucleus John appropriates for such modification in his apocalypse is drawn from the sacred records.* Hengstenberg has well shown, in discussing another point, that John never goes to classic or profane literature for any of his conceptions. He forcibly denies, on that ground, that the "palms" of chap. vii, where see our notes, are borrowed from pagan customs. All John's imageries arise from within the sacred domain. Perfectly unendurable, then, is the thought that John goes to the slums of Rome and picks out from the very dregs of heathendom a base *canard,* overlays it with a wretched, lying superstition of his own, and brings it into the sublimest of all prophecies. We pity the moral taste of the critic who, on a full survey of the case, does not repel such a notion.

All the world wondered—And to this day an **all the world,** larger than the then Roman **world,** and now embracing in full universality the ten horns, wonders **after the beast** in his papal development.

4. Worshipped the dragon—In retaining many of the forms and practices of old paganism. As the **dragon** is the impersonation of the pagan empire, so the **beast** is the impersonation of the nominally Christianized empire, and personal attributes and acts are ascribed to both alike. But the latter is made to individualize itself through the second **beast** and the **image,** as a sort of tri-unity, a three yet one. So that the official acts of the represent-

they worshipped the beast, saying, [l] Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? **5** And there was given unto him [m] a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him [3] to continue [n] forty *and* two months. **6** And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blas-

l Chapter 18. 18.—*m* Daniel 7. 8, 11, 25; 11. 36.

3 Or, *to make war.*—*n* Chapter 11. 2; 12. 6.

ative "image" are spoken of as the acts of the **beast**, the antichristic empire and *vice versa*. **Who is like**—Claim unique authority for the spiritual empire.

5. **Speaking great things**—Words from Dan. vii, 8, spoken of the fourth, or Roman **beast**, here claiming to be the sole Church of God on earth, out of which is no salvation; and in the person of its spokesman and pontiff claiming to be God on earth. **Forty and two months**—Or 1260 days. See note on xii, 14. Elliott measures this beast-period from the year A. D. 529, when the Emperor Justinian conferred the title and power of universal bishop on the pope. This starting-point will bring the close of the period at 1789. That year was the birth-year of the French Revolution, by which the despoliation of the power of the pope was inaugurated. The Church properties in France were confiscated, the monasteries were suppressed, and the clergy were compelled to a solemn abjuration of their allegiance to the pope. The other countries of Europe followed the French example. When Bonaparte came into power he deprived Pope Pius VII. of his territories, and imprisoned him. The pope continued stripped of his powers until the restoration of the old regimen on the downfall of Bonaparte. Popery never recovered its ancient persecuting supremacy. Since that day the decline of the politico-ecclesiastical power of the papacy has been constant, under the growth of the primitive principles of Christian toleration. The Protestant States have increased in intelligence and power, and the Romanistic have waned. The battle of Sadowa humbled the power of Austria, and the battle of Sedan prostrated France. The creation of the kingdom of Italy deprived the pope of his temporal kingdom, and Protestant missions are defying the pontiff in sight of the Vatican.

6. **Blasphemy against God**—By assuming the divine attribute of infallibility; by appropriating the title of God; and by the worship of Mary and the wafer.

The idolatrous aspect of popery is remarkably visible in the inauguration of the pope, that of Pius IX. included. He is first arrayed in his pontifical apparel, five articles of which are *scarlet;* with a single vestment covered with *pearls;* and with his mitre adorned with *gold and precious stones.* He is led to the altar, before which he kneels and prays, as before the seat of God. He then rises, wearing his mitre, and is lifted up by the cardinals and *seated on the very same altar.* A bishop, kneeling, commences the *Te Deum.* The cardinals meantime kiss his feet and hands. This ceremony is regularly styled, both in conversation and authoritative writings, "the Adoration of the Pope." "At Rome," says Heideggar, (quoted by Wordsworth,) "this phrase, to *adore the pope*, is in daily use." Says a French "History of the Clergy," dedicated to Pope Clement XI., Amst., 1716, "When the election is finished the pope is conducted to the chapel, where he receives the *adoration* of the cardinals. Then he is carried, seated in the pontifical seat, to the Church of St. Peter, and placed upon the altar . . . where he receives again, publicly, the adoration." "Various books," says Wordsworth, "have been written by Romish divines, such as Mazaroni, Stevanus, and Diana, concerning the *adoration* of the pope."

A specimen of this *adoration*, performed by Cardinal Colonna on his knees to Pope Innocent X., A.D. 1644, is authentically given by Wordsworth in the following words: "Most holy and blessed father, head of the Church, ruler of the world . . . to whom are

pheme his name, [o]and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. **7** And it was given unto him [p]to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: [q]and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. **8** And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, [r]whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain [s]from the foundation of the world. **9** [t]If any man have an ear, let him hear. **10** [u]He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: [v]he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. [w]Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 And I beheld another beast [x]coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. **12** And he exerciseth all the power of the

o John 1. 14; Col. 2. 9.—p Dan. 7. 21; chap. 11. 7; 12. 17.—q Chap. 11. 18; 17. 15.—r Exod. 32. 32; Dan. 12. 1; Phil. 4. 3; chap. 3. 5; 20. 12, 15; 21. 27.—s Chap. 17. 8.—t Chap. 2. 7.—u Isa. 33. 1.—v Gen. 9. 6; Matt. 26. 52.—w Chap. 14. 12.—x Chap. 11. 7

committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whom angels in heaven revere, whom the gates of hell fear, and all the world *adores*, thee we solely venerate, worship, and adore, and we submit all things that are ours to thy paternal and more than divine disposition and care."

His tabernacle — By creating a pantheon of saints to be adored. **Continue**—Rather, to *practice* or *perform*, referring not to duration of existence but of successful action. This seems to cover the period of something more than a thousand years of nearly undisputed papal supremacy.

7. **Make war with the saints** — By bloody wars, inquisitions, and burnings at the stake of all who would reform. **Overcome them**—Subjecting them, by blood and terror, to her despotic authority, denying all "right of private judgment." **All kindreds**—The Roman beast styles herself solely *catholic*, that is, universal. She claims that every human being is bound to obey her. "You all belong to me," said Pope Pius IX. to the Emperor William. She claims every American as her rightful subject, and the only reason at this hour that she does not force the claim by the same war and bloodshed, is want of power.

8. **All.... shall worship him**—Millions on the earth are now paying that homage. **Names ... not written** — Who are not justified by faith in Christ.

9. **Have an ear**—John here repeats the solemn injunction usual with our Lord when some momentous point was uttered. This predominance and cruelty of antichrist was of immense moment. Its importance is immense to us at this hour, for even now **the beast** is practising and purposing and hoping for a full verification of his claim to universal subjection.

10. **He that leadeth**—This verse is very incorrectly translated. It should be: He that is (destined) into captivity goeth into captivity; he that is (destined) to be slain by the sword must be slain by the sword. For the despot is relentless, and the martyr must suffer. And so it is well added, **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**

The second (*earth-born*) or two-horned beast—The hierarchy of the spiritual empire—Clergy, 11-14.

11. **Two horns like a lamb**—As the **lamb** is contrasted with the **beast**, antichrist, so is this two-horned, as a corrupt ministry, contrasted with the **elders**, the true ministry. And as this beast is called "false prophet," so it is clear that he is an ecclesiastical symbol. And his **two horns** very well represent the double power, ecclesiastical and secular, wielded by the Roman clerical hierarchy. **Spake as a dragon**—As if he were a second **dragon.** He mimics the **lamb** in appearance, but he equals the **dragon** in speech. That is, he pretends to be as Christ while he talks like Satan. This emblem suits nothing in history but a corrupt clergy.

12. **Exerciseth all the power of**

first beast before him, [y] and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, [z] whose deadly wound was healed. **13** And [a] he doeth great wonders, [b] so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And [c] deceiveth them that dwell on the earth [d] by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the

[y] 2 Thess. 2. 4.—[z] Verse 3.—[a] Deut. 13. 1-3; Matt. 24. 24; 2 Thess. 2. 9; chap. 16. 14.

[b] 1 Kings 18. 38; 2 Kings 1. 10, 12.—[c] Chap. 12. 9; 19. 20.—[d] 2 Thess. 2. 9, 10.

the first beast—As the spiritual empire inherited all the power of the secular empire, so the clergy **exerciseth all the power** of the spiritual empire. **To worship**—To bow before in religious reverence. **Whose deadly wound was healed**—That is, the clergy require this homage to be paid, not to the empire preceding the spiritual empire, but to the spiritual empire itself; which was the restored empire after **the deadly wounding**.

13. **Doeth great wonders**—The Romanists to-day teach us that one of the marks of a true Church is miracles; and they claim a continual train of miracles as existing in their own Church. Chief among these is the act of transubstantiation, by which every priest is able to "create the Son of God." But as this miracle is an invisible process, it is of no use in converting those who do not already believe. Romish books are full of transcendental marvels, narrating miraculous performances, sometimes ludicrous, often monstrous, and not seldom altogether surpassing those of Christ and his apostles in their prodigious character. The Bollandist volumes, more than sixty in number, approved by the pope, are full of tales written with a free inventive fancy, producing **great wonders** by the mere flourish of an unrestrained pen.

In modern times the "Holy Coat of Treves" was pronounced by Pope Gregory, predecessor of Pius IX., to be the true coat of Christ on which the soldiers cast lots, and for a time hundreds of thousands of pilgrims paid their visit to it.

Another specimen miracle is the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, which is exhibited thrice a year at Naples. A red mass is first shown in a vial, and then this gradually melts, and the process is considered miraculous! Probably it is a red substance liquefied by the warmth of the priest's hands. The classic Addison saw it and said, "So far from thinking it a miracle, I look upon it as one of the most bungling tricks I ever saw." The mechanical miracles of the moving eyes of the saints' images could be easily repeated by the manufacturers of our Christmas toys, but they were once powerful aids to Romish superstition. True miracles may, indeed, be the marks of a true Church; but false miracles are the marks of a false Church, especially as fulfilling predictions like this verse. **Fire come down from heaven**—Said Pope Pius IX., "I cannot, like St. Peter, launch certain thunders which reduce bodies to ashes; but I can, nevertheless, launch the thunders which reduce souls to ashes." Lightnings and thunderbolts are the terms under which excommunication is conceived. Gregory VII. pronounced the Emperor Henry IV. to be "struck with lightning," *afflatum fulmine*, by his excommunication. Says Ducange, "*To fulminate an excommunication* is the established phrase of the present day." So also we are told, in a work on the "Glories of Mary," that she once descended with torches in her hands and consumed a church building, at which she was offended, with fifteen hundred guilty occupants. See "Medieval Miracles," p. 138.

Living image of the first beast—the Popedom, 14-18.

14. **Deceiveth**—All these **miracles** were deceptions. **Power to do**—Either by aid of Satan or by ample means of combination and juggling machinery. **In the sight of the beast**—For

beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

c 2 Kings 20. 7.

his benefit and great approval. **Saying**—The clergy are the counsellors of submission to the spiritual empire. **They should make**—The pope is elected, indeed, by the clergy; but the popedom, and so every pope, is *created* by the popular superstition under the teachings of the clergy. That it is by the two-horned **lamb**, the clergy, that this is effected, is notorious. Says Mosheim, on the second century, "The monks, who from their supposed sanctity had the greatest influence with the multitude, held up the pope to their [the people's] veneration, *even as a god.*" And of a later date he says, "The Jesuits have turned the Roman pontiff into a terrestrial deity, and put him almost on a footing with the divine Saviour." He adds, "It may be easily proved that the Jesuits did no more in this than to propagate the doctrines as they found them to have been before the Reformation." Down to our own hour Pius IX. claimed all the two-horned beast conferred on the *image*. To a Belgian delegation, who presented him a tiara, that pope said, "You offer me gifts—a tiara, a symbol of my threefold royal dignity in heaven, upon earth, and in purgatory." He denounced the Old Catholics as heretics, "for they refuse to recognise the *divine prerogatives* of the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, and to obey his supreme jurisdiction." To another set of visitors he said, "The voice which now sounds in your ears is the voice of Him whom I represent on earth."

All the power which the pope once possessed of dethroning monarchs and disposing of kingdoms arose from the fact that the popular mind, under the clerical influence, firmly supported the pope as above emperor or king, being the representative of God and entitled to be called God

An image—A concentrated representative of, and *likeness* to, the spiritual empire. He was to be its living executive miniature. At the same time he was to be an idol to be worshipped. The symbol of an **image** is supposed to be based upon the custom of the Roman emperors to place their statues in a temple or other public place requiring divine honors to be paid to them. But here, 1. It is the spiritual empire itself that is to be imaged, and no individual person. 2. Powers and actions of a great living agent are attributed to it. 3. The images of the emperor were multitudinous, and set up in all parts of the empire; this is a *single image*. If the seer had intended the countless images, for instance, of Nero, he would naturally have used the plural, and expatiated on their great number.

An image to the beast, which ...did live—As an **image**, all the qualities and powers of the pontifical empire are gathered and impersonated in him. He is symbol and representative executive; and so ruler; not as hereditary sovereigns are, by natural inheritance, for he is *made*, not born, an image. And so most of the predicates made applicable to the beast are also applicable to the pope, and *vice versa*. The pope is one of the clergy, and so goes to make up the two-horned **lamb**. He is part of the papal empire, and so is one with the **beast**. The *name*, whether *Latinus*, Latin, or otherwise, belongs to *beast* and *image*—that is to pope or papal Church alike. The **image** fitted to the beast after he **did live** from his **deadly wound**, and his persecutions and exploits, are after his living from his death. If the beast therefore be, as some think, Nero, then most of Nero's persecutions were *after his imaginary resurrection*. But the resurrection never took place, and so *the persecutions could never take place*. The persecutions, though predicted, were as imaginary as the resurrection. If the beast was the supreme Roman power, then it was after its death in the Emperor and revival in the Pope that the persecutions took place. That is, *the persecutions were papal, not pagan.*

15 And he had power to give [4]life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, [f]and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. **16** And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, [5]to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: **17** And that no man might buy or sell, save he

4 Gr. *breath.*—*f* Chapter 16. 2; 19. 20; 20. 4.

g Chap. 14. 9; 19. 20; 20. 4.—5 Gr. *to give them.*

The persecutor was not the emperor but the pope.

15. **Life unto the image**—He was not to be a dead statue, like an **image** of an emperor; he should **speak**; and he, the **image**, should **cause** the refusers of worship to **be killed**. **Worship the image**—To the pope the attributes of the Deity are ascribed, the name God is given, and the *worship*, due to God, is offered the papal theocracy. See note on 2 Thess. ii, 7. The Canon also declared, "It is certain that the pope was styled *God* by Constantine, and it is manifest that God cannot be judged by men." And so Pope Urban II. maintained that he was judge of all men, but that he could be judged by no man, and he was acquitted of an accusation on that ground. And, under Pope Symmachus, at the beginning of the sixth century, it was declared that the pope was judge in the place of God, and could himself be judged by none. He was above all human jurisdiction. And, at the fifth Lateran Council, the orator announced, with all acceptance, "Thou art finally a second God on earth." See our notes on 2 Thessalonians ii, 4–10. **Killed**—No domination ever existed on earth so bloody and so cruel, in every form of infliction, as the popedom, from its first establishment to the present hour. Religious wars waged by its instigation, massacres and exterminations, inquisitions and dragonades, tortures by rack and by burning, form the staple of the history. The Spanish inquisition, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Smithfield fagots, are exploits of this infernal *image*. Every country in western Europe is stained by this antichrist with blood. It has ruined South America. In our Protestant North America its devotees are numerous and menacing, but impotent as yet.

16. **And he**—That is, the living and supreme **image**. **Causeth**—On this word, here and in the previous verse, we may note, 1. The entire body of Romish clergy find their own supremacy over the people to be identified with the absoluteness of the pope over themselves. And hence a common self-interest makes them a unit. An intense rivalry thence arises, to raise the pope to the highest point of supremacy. Thereby the pope becomes the primal *causative* spring of all persecutions to maintain the papal power. 2. But when charged with these persecutions, the papist replies that it is not the *spiritual power*, but the *temporal magistracy*, that really executes the punishment. The priest condemns, and the magistrate inflicts. The pope, therefore, does not execute; he **causeth** others to execute the heretic. **A mark**—Slaves, soldiers, and sailors were often *marked* by masters and sovereigns in token of ownership. Note on Gal. vi, 17. Ptolemy Philopater (3 Macc. ii, 29) enrolled the Jews of Alexandria as soldiers, and had them branded with the ivy of Bacchus with hot iron. And Philo says that some idolaters had their bodies branded with hot iron as an indelible mark which could not be obscured by time. The **mark** was branded, says Augustine, sometimes on forehead to denote profession, sometimes on the hand to denote activity of service.

17. **No man might buy**—Says E. B. Elliott: "A canon of the Lateran Council, under Pope Alexander III., commanded that no man should entertain or cherish them in his house or land, or *exercise traffic* with them. The Synod of Tours, (just when the Waldenses and Albigenses had begun to excite attention,) under the same Pope Alexander, passed the law that

that had the mark, or [h] the name of the beast, [i] or the number of his name. **18** [k] Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count [l] the number of the beast: [m] for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six.

[h] Chap. 14. 11.—[i] Chap. 15. 2.—[k] Chap. 17. 9.

[l] Chap. 15. 2.—[m] Chap. 21. 17.

no man should presume to receive or assist the heretics, no, not so much as to exercise commerce with them in *selling* or *buying*. And so, too, as expressed in Pope Martin's Bull, the Constance Council. How the mass of the clergy urged its execution in other days throughout the popedom is notorious."—Vol. iii, p. 217. We may add that to-day, in revising these notes, we find in a New York daily paper the report of a trial, in these United States, of a Roman priest for prohibiting his people from continuing their custom to an excommunicated parishioner, the damages being laid at ten thousand dollars, the jury's verdict being over three thousand. Such is this persecuting power to this day.

18. **Here is wisdom . . . understanding**—The **here** means, *in the true solution of this problem*. The man who tries must bring his intellect to it; and the man who succeeds has brought **here** a true **wisdom**; a **wisdom** which not only involves a good many questions of history and literature, but is pregnant with very important conclusions. **Number of the beast**—That is, of his **name**. To understand this, we must know that the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans used not our now numerical Arabic figures in arithmetic, but the letters of their alphabets. The first ten letters in Hebrew and Greek stood for our figures from 1 to 10. Then the next ten designated the *tens*, repeated to a *hundred;* the rest designated thousands. By a little ingenuity both a **number** and a **name** might then be found in a certain arrangement of letters. This not only furnished room for play of fancy among Christians, but among cabalists a pretence of deep meanings. Thus the Greek Jesus, *Jesous:* J=10, e=8 s=200, o=70, u=400, s=200=888; quite an antithesis to 666. **Number of a man—A number** which a **man** would use, and therefore calculable by a man. See note on xxi, 17. **Six hundred threescore and six**—When a problem of this kind is proposed and recorded for centuries, it might be expected that a great number of names would, in the course of centuries, be produced as the solution. We might at first imagine, too, that a plenty of fitting names would be furnished, and so the problem be really swamped. Numerous names have indeed been furnished, but scarce one meeting the obvious conditions. Puerile as a problem based on the position of letters and numerals may at first seem, the present problem includes elements and conditions tasking the most vigorous **wisdom**. The only **name** that seems to meet all the conditions, is one of the oldest, adduced by Irenæus, the grand-pupil of St. John himself, *Lateinos, Latinus, Latin*. Some conditions of the problem may be as follows: 1. The proposed **name** should be a true proper **name**, and not a mere descriptive phrase, or word, or title. *Lateinos* meets this condition, being a true *proper name*, whether as adjective or substantive. America, for instance, is a proper name of a whole country or territory. *American* is an adjective proper name, applicable to the country, the people, or the individual. So *Latin* is the proper name of the Roman State, or ruler, or citizen. Such words, on the contrary, as *απόστατης*, apostate, *κακός οδηγός*, *wicked guide*, etc., are to be rejected as descriptive phrases, and not proper names. So Ewald's Hebrew terms for *Cesar of Rome* are hardly one name, but two, or else a title and a name. And so Ferdinand Bénary's solution, in Hebrew, *Nero Cesar*, is a name and title, and is excluded. This excludes such descriptive phrases as *The Latin Kingdom, Italic Church*, etc.

2. The orthography of the name should be the orthography of good authority and use. If the name be

made out by mutilations, by giving false letters, or abstracting true ones, almost any name can be made to fit. *Lateinos*, all scholars allow to be unexceptionable in this respect. But the name of Mohammed, in the Greek form, as *Moametis*, given by some commentators, has no authority, and, after a thorough investigation by scholars, is shown to be spurious.

3. The proposed name must be not in the Saxon, Latin, or Hebrew language, but in the Greek. Says E. B. Elliott, (vol. iii, p. 205,) "There is the highest probability of the language and number of the word being *Greek*, and not *Hebrew*, because the apocalypse was intended for the use of the Gentiles, to whom Hebrew was scarcely known; because the first and last letters of the *Greek* alphabet are expressly selected by Christ in the apocalypse, and not those of the Hebrew, to express his eternity. 'I am *a* and *ω*, saith the Lord,' (Apoc. i, 8,) because the *numerals* in which the enigma is expressed are Greek numerals, and because Irenæus directly asserts, and all the other early fathers imply, by making their solutions in Greek, that that was understood by *them* to be the language intended by the Divine Spirit." This again excludes Prof. Bénary's Hebrew *Nero Cesar*, the Hebrew, רמענוש, *Romanus;* and such names as Luther, Calvin, and others, adduced, as retort, by the papists.

These principles, if valid, effectually exclude all the plausibly proposed names except the one furnished by Irenæus, namely, *Lateinos*. And the distinctive name of the Romish communion is THE LATIN CHURCH. Says Dr. Henry Moore: "They Latinize every thing. Mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls, are conceived in Latin. The papal councils speak in Latin. Women themselves pray in Latin. The Scriptures are read in no other language than the Latin. In short all things are Latin."

The most formidable rival, however, in spite of the several points of exclusion, is the Hebrew name, *Nero Cesar*. This name seems to have dawned upon the minds of four eminent scholars almost simultaneously, in 1836; namely, Fritzsche, in Rostock; Hitzig, in Zurich; Bénary, in Berlin; and Reuss, in Strasburg. With a certain class of thinkers it seemed to carry all before it.

An almost conclusive proof of this name being the true solution, arose from a very peculiar coincidence. Irenæus tells us that there were in the then extant manuscripts two different readings of the numbers; the older and more accurate was 666, but a later 616. Now there were also two forms of the name Nero, both used in Hebrew; one, after the Greek, was *Nerōn*, the other, after the Latin, was *Nero*, and the former of these made the 666, and the latter exactly 616! Should not that settle the question?

To this one might reply that Irenæus tells us that the 616 was found only in later manuscripts, and so they could not have come from John. And how could copyists have adjusted their codices to Nero's name, and Irenæus never have heard of that name as a candidate? Indeed, Irenæus's omission of that name in discussing the candidates is a powerful argument against its claims.

But the French Professor Godet (in his *Studies of the New Testament*) denies that 666 is the true number of the Hebrew name Nero Cesar. Its true number is really 676, according to the spelling in St. John's day. The number 666 is spelled with the three Hebrew consonants, K, S, R; the needed E of the first syllable being supplied by a vowel point; whereas the true orthography of the word Cesar, as identified by contemporary record, has four letters; requiring the E to be, not a vowel point, but a full letter, thereby increasing the number by a ten, making 676. This would entirely destroy the identification of the number with Nero. It is, indeed, given up by such rationalistic scholars as De Wette, Lücke, Bunsen, and Düsterdieck. We consider the Neronian solution of this name, like the Neronian date of the apocalypse, a very plausible, yet entirely preposterous, fable.

But there are some points of peculiar significance, both in the figures 666 and in the combination of the Greek letters that form the number, as they present themselves to the eye.

First, as to the significance of the 666. As seven is the perfect number, 7, 7, 7, thus trinally taken, would be the symbol of divine perfection, the Trinity. Three *half sevens* would be the reverse of perfection, the directly bad. Three *sixes* are an attempt to attain or display the divine perfection, but are a failure, a falling short, and that, perhaps, by a divinely-imposed limitation. And thus in this 666 is numerically figured the would-be Christ —the antichrist.

And as to the combination of Greek letters that form the number 666, they are in John's Greek text, χξς, that is, *chi*, *xi*, and *st*. But, striking out the middle letter, the remaining two, χ—ς, are the customary abbreviation in the manuscripts of the name *Christ*. Now let the serpentine ξ crawl in between these two letters, and what have we in χξς? A central serpent wearing the externals of Christ; a serpent-Christ; an anti-Christ! Nor, says Godet, must this be promptly dismissed as a puerility. The Orientals were thus accustomed to express conceptions in figured forms to the eye, as even in our modern west we have the coat of arms, and in our America the "stars and stripes." An ingenious, reflective people, before books are printed, are inclined to shape a momentous thought into an impressive mnemonic form. Thereby we get coin stamps, monograms, signet rings, abraxases, symbols pregnant with impressive import.

There is certainly presented here a curious combination of agreements. They are a numerical *name*, Lateinos, that points to Rome; a trinal *number*, 666, that suggests the pseudo-divine; and a monogrammic triplet of *letters*, χξς, that imports a Satanic Christ. It has taken centuries of thought to develop this combination, indicating that νοῦς has, indeed, been exerted here in large amount. We leave the reader to decide whether the combination was really planned by the νοῦς of John.

CHAPTER XIV.

FIRST OVERTHROW — OF ANTICHRIST'S CAPITAL, BABYLON, xiv, 1–xvi, 21.

1. The chapter of war menace by Jerusalem against Babylon, xiv, 1-20.

A careful survey of this and the two following chapters reveals that our locality throughout is *at Jerusalem;* and that here gradually unfold the hostilities from thence by which Babylon is overthrown. This triad of chapters is thereby a TRILOGY of Babylonic destruction. Thus **mount Zion,** verse 1; **the throne and...elders,** verse 3; **the temple,** verse 15; **the temple,** xv, 6, 8, and xvi, 1, all indicate that we are in Jerusalem. Of the war from Jerusalem by which Babylon is overthrown in this triad of chapters, chapter xiv contains Jerusalem's war manifestoes and menaces; chapter xv her preparation; and xvi her execution, of the war, ending in the demolition of the guilty capital. The choral song on mount Zion, xiv, 1–5; the three angels menacing Babylon and her followers, 6–13; the aerial omens of harvest and blood, 14–20, are all warlike manifestoes issued in gradually-increasing definiteness from the holy capital against the Satanic metropolis. More fearful still, chapter xv prepares the battery of **plagues** for the devoted city issuing from the Jerusalem **temple.** Chap. xvi goes through the terrible seven discharges of the **plagues,** each with increasing sureness of aim, 1–12; responded to from the Babylonic powers sending forth their emissaries to rally their Satanic hosts, and **to gather them to the battle,** 13–15. Then at the seventh vial comes an earthquake crash, and Babylon goes to pieces, 17–21.

a. ANTICIPATIVE BUT INDEFINITE JOY-SONG AT JERUSALEM ON MOUNT ZION, 1–5.

From the distant sea whence the beast emerged, the spirit eye of the seer, standing on mount Moriah, (note iv, 11,) now looks toward Jerusalem, to Zion, and to the temple, where (as in

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AND I looked, and, lo, [a] a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him [b] a hundred forty *and* four thousand, [c] having his Father's name written in their foreheads. **2** And I heard a voice from heaven, [d] as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of [e] harpers harping with their harps. **3** And [f] they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song [g] but the hundred *and* forty *and*

a Chapter 5. 6.—*b* Chapter 7. 4.—*c* Chapter 7. 3; 13. 16.

d Chap. 1. 15; 19. 6.—*e* Chap. 5. 8.—*f* Chap. 5. 9; 15. 3.—*g* Verse 1.

vi, 1, where see note) are the throne and the twenty-four elders.

1. **I looked, and lo**—The words signalize the change of sight-direction, and the opening of a new scene of symbols. Great is the contrast between **the sea** of **the beast** and the **mount** of the one hundred forty and four thousand. The phrase **And I saw,** or *looked,* opens a second movement of the panorama at verse 6, and a third at verse 14. **A Lamb**—Rather, *the* **Lamb**; known from former mention. The glorious leader is here the **Lamb,** since it is in his atoning character that this glorious host expects to conquer. **The mount Zion** was of course easily seen by John from Moriah. The throne might seem to be in the most holy place, yet allowing all visional freedom. The Jerusalem they are in is not the material Jerusalem, but the mystic Christian capital, in antithesis with the mystic antichristic capital, Babylon. **And with him**—Who are this **hundred forty and four thousand?** Düsterdieck denies them to be the same as those of chapter vii, and affirms them to be a choice body of eminently pure saints. For, 1. The article is omitted before the number, so that they are not *the,* but **a** hundred forty and four thousand, the number being merely a churchly designation; and, 2. They are the Jewish symbol, because the enemies they oppose are pagan, that is, Gentile. But Alford maintains the full identity with the glorious company of the former chapter. We think the truth lies between the two commentators. The two glorious companies are the same, but not in equal amount. Chapter vii purposes to symbolize the *entire* Church of glorified spirits; this simply represents a part of the same, including only the earlier Church—the Church of both the pagan and papal martyrdoms; hence they are called **first-fruits.** The **hundred forty and four thousand** are still from Israel, and the **harpers** are still the Gentiles. In fact, the whole are the souls under the altar of chapter vi, multiplied in number, and giving their own holy character to the whole Church of their period; they have risen from beneath the altar, have sealed mount Zion, and fill the very **heaven** above the mystic Jerusalem, pouring down their strains of song upon the ear of St. John.

2. **Heard a voice from heaven**—From the ethereal or firmamental **heaven,** over the company on the **mount,** there comes a choral **voice.** The blessed air is full of heavenly music. It is from a very full celestial choir, for their **voice** is **as the voice of many waters, as . . . a great thunder. And I heard**—Better reading, **And . . . the voice** *which I heard was as the voice* **of harpers,** etc. There was but one aerial company, at first **heard** but not seen, whose **voice** was sweet as harp melody, yet full as the **waters'** roar, and loud as **a great thunder.**

3. **A new song**—Different, quite, from the wail under the altar of vi, 10. **Before the throne**—The invisible **harpers** become visible; from the ether they have descended on Moriah; they are before the Theophanic **throne** and its permanent court. **No man could learn that song**—None but the **redeemed** can truly **learn** and truly sing the **song** of the **redeemed.** Others may imitate it by rote, but the full depth of its music is not in their souls, and the imitation is spurious and

four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. **4** These are they which were not defiled with women; [h]for they are virgins. These are they [i]which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These [j k]were redeemed from among men, [l]*being* the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. **5** And [m]in their mouth was found no guile: for [n]they are without fault before the throne of God. **6** And I saw another angel [o]fly in the midst of heaven, [p]having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, [q]and

h 2 Cor. 11. 2.—*i* Chap. 3. 4; 7. 15, 17; 17. 14.—1 Greek, *were bought.*—*k* Chap. 5. 9.—*l* James 1. 18.

m Psa. 32. 2; Zeph. 3. 13.—*n* Eph. 5. 27; Jude 24.—*o* Chap. 8. 13.—*p* Eph. 3. 9-11; Titus 1. 2.—*q* Chap. 13. 7.

counterfeit. Hence it is clear that the **harpers** were not angels, but **redeemed** saints. They were an abridged specimen of the multitude that no man could number of vii, 9, and, like them, Gentile counterpart to the Israelite hundred forty and four thousand. The Israelite number, as being at home in the mystic Jerusalem, are on **Zion**; the Gentiles, as coming from all the nations, gather on Moriah, **before the throne.** It is a festal gathering. The **new song** indicates that an era auspicious of future triumph over the strongholds of Satan has opened.

4. **These are they**—Verses 4 and 5 are strikingly parallel with vii, 14. 15. This fact indicates that Düsterdieck is mistaken in supposing that this company is a select class of eminent saints. The simple truth is, that the virtues specially ascribed to them are selected as contrast to the vices ascribed to their Babylonian persecutors. These are **not defiled with women,** in contrast with **the whore** and her partisans that **did corrupt the earth with her fornication.** Compare xviii, 3, 7, 9. **They are virgins**—The Greek term is applicable to either sex, and in its full literal sense implies not only purity from fornication, but abstinence from all sexual indulgence. But it cannot be supposed to be affirmed that all the early Church were chaste celibates. Rather, are they all **virgins** in the sense in which the whole Church is the purely chaste bride of Christ, which takes sexual purity as the ideal type of all purity from sin. Such a view honours matrimony, and yet allows that there may be a chaste celibacy, not forced nor bound by changeless vows, which may enjoy the royal prerogative of pre-eminent consecration of itself to God. Note 1 Cor. vii, 1–9. **Follow ...whithersoever he goeth**—They are the special retinue and obedient body-guard of their Lord. The oath of the ancient soldiers bound them, in similar words, "to follow their generals wherever they may lead." **Redeemed...men**—Not **redeemed** as Düsterdieck, "in an eminent sense," but in the same sense as the whole true Church. **First fruits**—Early in time in comparison with the Christian and millennial ages that will follow; choice in character, as having fought the battles of persecution against the beast.

5. **No guile**—Greek, **no** *lie.* Contrast with the "great wonders" of the second beast, "the *false* prophet," who "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth," (xiii, 13. 14,) "with all signs and lying wonders," "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," "that they should believe a *lie.*" 2 Thess. i, 9–11. And the work of the reappearing dragon is to "deceive the nations," xx, 3, 8. The song of this holy throng bodes no good to the powers of darkness. And still clearer omens now appear in the mid-sky.

b. THREE ANGELS HOVERING IN MID HEAVEN OVER JERUSALEM, 6-13.

1. *First angel proclaims the triumphal everlasting gospel,* 6, 7.

From **mount Zion,** where the martyr army is uttering its chant, the eye of the seer standing on Moriah is directed sky-wards, and beholds objects in next verse.

6. **Another angel**—In addition to the many angels who have appeared in former scenes. **The everlasting**

to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, **7** Saying with a loud voice, [r] Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: [s] and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. **8** And there followed another angel, saying, [t] Babylon is fallen, is fallen, [u] that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. **9** And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, [v] If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, **10** The same [w] shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is [x] poured

[r] Chap. 11. 18; 15. 4.—[s] Neh. 9. 6; Psa. 33. 6; 124. 8; 146. 6; Acts 14. 15; 17. 24.—[t] Isa. 21. 9; Jer. 51. 8; chap. 18. 2.

[u] Jer. 51. 7; chap. 11. 8; 16. 19; 17. 2, 5; 19. 3, 10, 18, 21; 19. 2.—[v] Chap. 13. 14-16.—[w] Psa. 75. 8; Isa. 51. 17; Jer. 25. 15.—[x] Chap. 18. 6.

gospel — The truth of Jesus, **everlasting** in its endurance, unlike the falsehoods it contradicts. It is here strikingly intimated that the very beginning and source of the overthrow of antichrist's citadel is the **everlasting gospel.** It is divine truth that is to overthrow this mighty stronghold of error and sin, which the "Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth." 2 Thess. ii, 8. **Nation...kindred...tongue...people**—The cosmical four, implying the utmost universality, unlimited to any one land or continent. It is strictly a universal gospel, proclaimed to all mankind, and destined to universal diffusion.

7. **Fear God....glory to him**—And not to saints, angels, Mary, the wafer, or to images. The absolute universality is again shadowed by the cosmical *four*—**heaven...earth...sea...fountains.** The clear proclamation of this **gospel** is destruction to Babylon. And this its aim is rendered more specific by the announcement of the next angel.

2. *Second angel defines the object of these war manifestoes—Babylon,* 8.

8. **Babylon...fallen**—Or, with the elegant inversion of the Greek: *Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great.* It is the prophetic future-preterite. Here first occurs in the apocalypse the name of "great BABYLON." It carries our thought back to the Babel built by the survivors of the flood on the plains of the Euphrates, where was first developed in history, under Nimrod, the type of mighty but godless nationality. It next appears in sacred history under one of the greatest princes of antiquity, Nebuchadnezzar, as the conqueror and leader into captivity of beloved Jerusalem. Then commenced the antithetical typology which is unfolded in the apocalypse. Babylon was then the great profane empire city, hostile to the city of God, in which a false religion dominates the world and persecutes the followers of Jehovah. But Babylon is now transferred westward and impersonated in Rome. And this new Babylon first is dragon or pagan, and then, semi-Christianized, is bestial or papal. It was first anti-God, and so anti-Christ; it is now specifically anti-Christ. And under the victorious career of Christ it must finally fall; fall embracing in itself all the profane traits of its typical national predecessors; fall followed by the destruction of all Babylonianism, secular and ecclesiastical. **Wine of the wrath of her fornication**—A very pregnant expression. Her **fornication** is at once a seductive **wine** and a destructive **wrath;** wine to the appetite, wrath upon the soul and body.

3. *Third angel pours forth a volume of divine malediction against Babylon and her devotees for martyring the saints,* 9–12.

9. **The third angel**—Most terrible and full of all, this **angel** crowns the climax of menace with denouncing judgments on all the Babylonic peoples, 9–13. **Beast...image...mark**—Note xv, 2.

10. **Wine of the wrath of God**—The double effect of **wine**—first to exhilarate, and then, when drunk in full

out without mixture into [y] the cup of his indignation; and [z] he shall be tormented with [a] fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: **11** And [b] the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. **12** [c] Here is the patience of the saints: [d] here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. **13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, [e] Blessed *are* the dead [f] which die in the Lord [2] from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, [g] that they may rest from their la-

[y] Chap. 16. 19. — [z] Chap. 20. 10. — [a] Chap. 19. 20. — [b] Isa. 34. 10; chap. 19. 3; Joel 2. 30; Luke 16. 23. — [c] Chap. 13. 10. — [d] Chap. 12. 17.

[e] Eccles. 4. 1, 2; chap. 20. 6. — [f] 1 Cor. 15. 18; 1 Thess. 4. 16. — [2] Or, *from henceforth saith the Spirit, Yea.* — [g] 2 Thess. 1. 7; Heb. 4. 9; ch. 6. 11.

quantity, to asphyxiate—is here alluded to. The former images the exciting power of sin, the latter its destructive effect. To sip the wine is a delight; to drink the cup to its dregs is destruction. **Poured out without mixture**—The Greek has a play upon words: *Which is mixed without mixture.* The wine was so customarily mingled with water that the Greek word *mixed* came to signify *prepared.* Hence the phrase *prepared* **without mixture** could, as here, be verbally, *mixed* **without mixture. Cup of his indignation**—As if divine justice had a regular retributive **cup. Fire and brimstone**—Imagery borrowed from Genesis xix, 24. "Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire." The imagery of fire and brimstone for the wicked is used in Psalm xi, 6, and brimstone in Job xviii, 15. This imagery is not used in the New Testament excepting in the Apocalypse, namely, here and xix, 20, xxi, 8. "The addition of *brimstone* to the imagery," says Stuart, "renders it exceedingly intense: for this not only makes the fire to rage with the greatest vehemence, but it is noisome to the smell and suffocating to the breath." Of those who maintain that final punishment is in literal **fire** it may be asked, Is the **brimstone** literal? **Presence of angels...Lamb**—Their sentence and execution take place by the judgment and solemn approbation of the holiest and most merciful of Kings. Holiness and love ratify the penalties of divine justice.

12. **Here**—In refusing this worship of the beast and avoiding this direful destiny. **Patience** — Endurance of persecution from Babylon and her adherents. **Keep**—Faithfully obey. **The commandments of God**—Against all idolatry with its fornications, as noted on verse 7. **Faith of Jesus** — The Lord of the holy capital.

13. **Heard a voice from heaven**—The above three menacing angel-voices were from the mid-heaven; but now peals down a **voice** from the highest **heaven** in beautiful contrast with the menacing voices. Amid the menaces upon the persecutors it interpolates a benediction upon the faithful dying sufferers. **Write** — Let this blessed assurance be well recorded. **Blessed are the dead** — They are under no malediction, in no **torment,** in no unconsciousness, for they are **blessed,** that is, happy and more than happy. **Die in the Lord** — Said on occasion of their martyr-death, yet in such comprehensive terms as to include all the dying faithful in all ages. **From henceforth**—This **from henceforth,** starts from the death of each individual dying saint. The meaning then is, *those dying* **in the Lord** *are thenceforth and forever* **blessed.** The end of a holy life is the commencement of an eternal bliss. This assures the unshrinking faithful who refuse **the beast, his mark,** and his **number,** and thereby meet death, that their destiny is not **torment,** but blessedness. **Yea, saith the Spirit**—This appears to be a responding **voice** ratifying the affirmation of blessedness. John hears this response **from** the same highest **heaven,** and knows and tells us that so **saith the Spirit.** By inspired in-

bours; and their works do follow them. **14** And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat [h] like unto the Son of man, [i] having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. **15** And another angel [k] came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, [l] Thrust in thy sickle,

[h] Ezek. 1. 26; Dan. 7. 13; chap. 1. 13.—[i] Chap. 6. 2.—[k] Chap. 16. 17.—[l] Joel 3. 13; Matt. 13. 39.

and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest [m] of the earth is [3] ripe. **16** And [n] he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. **17** And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. **18** And another angel came out from the altar, [o] which

[m] Jer. 51. 33; chap. 13. 12.—[3] Or, *dried*.—[n] Matt. 16. 27; John 5. 22, 23.—[o] Chap. 16. 8.

tuition he knows the voice of **the Spirit,** and allows us now to infer that the first **voice** was from the First Person of the Trinity, and the response from the Third. **That**—In order that. Depends upon **die.** Those dying **in the Lord** do truly **die,** in order **that they may rest from their labours. And**—Better reading, *For*, assigning a reason *for* their blessed **rest,** namely, that **their works** of keeping **the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,** (verse 12,) **do follow them,** namely, from this world to the next, as witnesses for their justification with God.

c. Sky-vision (over Jerusalem) of the harvest and bloody vintage of Babylon, 14–20.

So far the menaces against Babylon have been *verbal;* our seer now, standing on Moriah, beholds *two visible* tokens of coming doom hung out in the heavens over Jerusalem. *First*, a dim likeness of the Lord of the harvest is descried in the sky, visiting his ripening and drying field; and a servant angel reports to him that all is ready. The work is, in vision, summarily executed.

14. **And I looked, and behold**—A fresh movement of the panorama reveals a new wonder in the sky. **White cloud**—A nebulous image of "the great white throne" of xx, 11. **Like unto the Son of man**—The expression implies, not doubt of the identity, but the visionary aspect of the object to the eye. **A golden crown**—The token of his lordship over the land.

15. **Another angel**—Besides the three menacing-angels above described. **Out of the temple**—Still at Jerusalem. **Crying**—The **angel** superintendent of the Lord's field pronounces **the harvest** to be **ripe. The earth,** or land, **was reaped.** It takes but a single **thrust** of that **sickle!**

17. **And**—The misty forms of the white cloud, its occupant, and the harvest field, have all instantly disappeared. But a *second* and more terrible, though equally transient, volume of the sky-picture appears in its place to complete the series of omens. To **the harvest** of wrath succeeds the vintage of **blood.** By the phrase **temple in heaven** Düsterdieck and Alford are somewhat nonplussed. The word **heaven** means, as often elsewhere, the firmamental **heaven,** (note iv, 11,) or **sky.** And the simple meaning is, that a visional **temple,** with its **altar,** outlined itself in the sky-vision as part of the omen scenery. **Angel...sharp sickle**—The Lord of the **harvest** has reaped the grain; but leaves to his servants the treading of the bloody **winepress.** The blood-red colour of the juice of the grape suggests the thought of carnage; and the pressure by which it is crushed out suggests the **wrath** that compels the carnage. The image is taken from Isaiah lxiii, 3, where Jehovah's treading the winepress and pouring forth the blood of the grape, is an image of the crushing of the wicked powers in behalf of his people.

18. **Another angel**—The two *angels* of verses 17, 18, are the angels of the bloody vintage. The former has the **sickle,** and is the executioner; the latter reports the ripeness and readiness for the bloodshed. **Came out from the altar**—As the previous came from the visional **temple** in the sky; where the

had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, [p] Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. **19** And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into [q] the great winepress of the wrath of God. **20** And [r] the winepress was trodden [s] without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, [t] even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.

[p] Joel 3. 13.—[q] Chap. 19. 15.—[r] Isa. 63. 3; Lam. 1. 15.—[s] Heb. 13. 12; chap. 11. 8.

divine wrath against Babylon is brewing. **The altar** is the basis on which the victim is placed with bloodshed; thence it is revealed that the moment is **ripe** for the sacrifice. **Power over fire**—And was, therefore, the proper angel to guard the fires of the **altar**. The imagery presupposes the guardianship of the different elements by appointed angels. So in Rev. vii, 1, 2, we have the angels of the four winds, and in xvi, 5, the angel of the waters. **Are fully ripe**—As the juice of the grape has **fully** matured for the press, so the sins of Babylon are full for divine punishment.

20. **Without the city**—As grapes and vintage are usually rural matters, so this symbolic picture, 14–20, reaches not to the complete downfall of **the city,** but to the adjacent slaughters. But what **city?** The bewildered Alford, with many others, replies *Jerusalem!* But throughout this whole chapter Jerusalem is the place of **the** menace, and Babylon is its object. **Even unto the horses' bridles**—The visional sky-horses waded in **blood** so deep that their **bridles** were visionally bathed in its crimson. **A thousand and six hundred**—The root of this number is the creational *four*, intimating that this battle is no local event, but *world-wide.* This view is intensified by the squaring of the four and the multiplying of that square, sixteen, by the square of ten, one hundred. This brief menacing cloud-picture of the coming contest predicts that the destruction from the city will spread over the earth; or rather, perhaps, indicates that the real city is itself earthwide in locality.

CHAPTER XV.

AND [a] I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, [b] seven angels having the seven last plagues; [c] for in them is filled up

[t] Chap. 19. 14.—[a] Chap. 12. 1, 3.—[b] Chap. 16. 1; 21. 9.—[c] Chap. 14. 10.

CHAPTER XV.

2. The chapter of War Preparation (at Jerusalem) for Babylon's destruction, 1-8.

The seven destroying **angels** *in* **the temple;** *presented with the* **vials,** 1–7.

1. **And**—As the menaces of the last chapter were in Jerusalem and the temple, so here we are still in the temple at the glass **sea;** the martyr spirits on its shore are chanting anticipated victory over **the beast,** 1–4; the **tabernacle** is **opened,** 5; the **seven angels** of **the last plagues** come from **the temple,** 6, 7; while the divine presence of Jehovah himself stays *in the* **temple,** 8, until the **seven plagues** do their fatal work on antichrist's capital.

Another sign — Or symbol. **Another,** in addition to those in xii, 1, 3. **In heaven**—That is, in the **heaven** or region, of symbol. Note iv, 11. The **seven angels,** as being the main figures in the great overthrow, are mentioned before their time, (which comes at ver. 6,) and as emphatically the **sign ...great and marvellous.** Or we may say the **sign... great and marvellous** comprehends the entire exhibition of this chapter; nay, perhaps even including the process and catastrophe of next chapter. And thus this **another sign** forms a marvellous antithesis to the two of xii and xiii. **Last plagues —Last** as being final for Babylon. **For**—Assigning reason for their being a finality; they **fill** up the retribution due to Satan's capital. **Plagues**—The

the wrath of God. **2** And I saw as it were [d]a sea of glass [e]mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, [f]and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, [g]having the harps of God. **3** And they sing [h]the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, [i]Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; [k]just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of [l]saints. **4** [l]Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for [m]all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. **5** And after that I looked, and, behold, [n]the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven

d Ch. 4. 6; 21. 18.——*e* Matt. 3. 11.——*f* Ch. 13. 15–17.——*g* Ch. 5. 8; 14. 2.——*h* Exod. 15. 1; Deut. 31. 30; ch. 14. 3.——*i* Deut. 32. 4; Psa. 111. 2; 139. 14.——*k* Psa. 145. 17; Hos. 14. 9; ch. 16. 7.——*l* Or, *nations*, or, *ages*.——*l* Exod. 15. 14–16; Jer. 10. 7.——*m* Isa. 66. 23.——*n* Ch. 11. 19; see Num. 1. 50.

Greek word for *plague* signifies, literally, a *blow*, a *smite;* and the infliction is thus assumed to be made by a divine stroke. It is as if the outpouring of the vial was the external sign; but a stroke from Jehovah from his secret place in the temple (verse 8) made the infliction.

2. **Sea of glass**—Not *glassy* **sea,** but **sea** consisting of glass. As in iv, 6, it is before the throne; and the martyr spirits who in xiv, 1 stood at a distance therefrom **on mount Zion,** are now advanced to this higher position. The **sea,** which on the former occasion was pure and colorless, is now suffused with **fire,** the omen of coming retribution. **Gotten . . . victory over**—Better translated by Stuart, *were conquerors from the beast;* that is, had come victorious *from* the combat with him. **Image . . . name**—The **image** they had never worshipped; the **name** they had never borne; the significance of its **number** they had never realized. **On the sea**—Like Moses of old on the shore of the Red Sea, after the overthrow of Pharaoh.

3. **Song of Moses**—Sung on the sea after a similar escape. **Of the Lamb**—The same song elevated to a higher triumph. It is a song not only of triumph but of judgment; once over Egypt, now over Babylon, finally over the world. **Saying**—The import of the twofold song is now given. It is a chant of adoration to God for his wonderful judgments on the organic wickedness of the profane world. **Works**—Of just overthrow by him whose name is majestically expanded to its trinal form. **King of saints**—Better reading, **of** *ages;* and perhaps still better, **of** *nations.* It then alludes to the profane **nations** typified by Babylon, and bound to be overthrown.

4. **Only art holy**—Even we, the redeemed, are **holy** only from thee. **All nations**—A premonition of the time when the world shall be filled with the true knowledge and **worship** of God. And it is to be noted that the **nations,** though overthrown in their profane character, are not *destroyed,* but so attracted as to **come and worship.** See notes on xx, 1–4. **Are made manifest**—The prophetic preterite-future, prospecting the coming judgment on **the great city.**

5. The present **song** of the martyr spirits before the throne corresponds with their **song** on **Zion,** xiv, 1, and also to the utterances of the **great voices in heaven** at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, xi, 15–19. And as in the latter passage (verse 19) the ark of the testimony is made visible, so there is here also the same opening of the same token of **testimony** to the sight. In both presentations the meaning is the same, (see note xi, 19,) namely, the responsive pledge of Jehovah that the judgment predicted by the martyr **song** shall be inflexibly inflicted. By the faith of the **Lord God Almighty** the judgment is assured. **I looked, and, behold**—This opening of the inner sanctuary was a startling wonder. **Temple**—The *naos,* or most holy place. **Of the tabernacle**—The reproduction of the old **tabernacle** of Moses in the wilderness, where God

was opened: **6** °And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, ᵖclothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. **7** ᑫAnd one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, ʳwho liveth for ever and ever. **8** And ˢthe temple was filled with smoke ᵗfrom the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

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o Verse 1.—*p* Exod. 28. 6, 8; Ezek. 44. 17, 18; chap. 1. 13.—*q* Chap. 4. 6.—*r* 1 Thess. 1. 9; chap. 4. 9; 10. 6.—*s* Exod. 40. 34; 1 Kings 8. 10; 2 Chron. 5. 14; Isa. 6. 4.—*t* 2 Thess. 1. 9.

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once dwelt with Israel. **Of the testimony** — Namely, of God's covenant with his people. In this vision it declares God's covenant with his martyrs that judgment shall not fail. And forthwith the executioners of that judgment, **the seven angels,** appear on the scene.

6. **Seven angels**—The number, sacredly assigned, of the divine ministers of judgment on Babylon. **The temple** — The very *citadel of Christ's capital;* the inmost residence of the hostile forces against the antichristic citadel. **Having the seven plagues** — Said here to designate their assigned ministries, though the **seven ... vials** are not given them until the next verse. **Clothed**—Arrayed in the *priestly* vestments, for theirs is a holy office, the bloody sacrifice of the enemies of God. **Pure and white linen**—The sacred antithesis of the "scarlet" of the harlot. The rendering here then would be, *Decked with a clear and brilliant stone.* **Golden girdles—Girdles,** to signify preparedness for their ministry; **golden,** to show its rich and royal nature. Note on i, 13.

7. **One of the four beasts**—The four living creatures represent *creation;* and correspondently the first *four* **plagues** are poured out upon different parts of the created framework. It seems most obvious that these four plagues are in the order, not of chronological succession, but of the suitable occurrence of the objects. The attempt, therefore, to assign dates of year or month is illegitimate. And as the seven-series of the plagues does not, like those of the seals and trumpets, mount up to the scenes of the dissolution and final judgment, but images a judgment limited to the earth's surface, so the whole seven **vials** are given by **one of the four** creational **beasts. Vials**—Rather, *saucers;* being, as Alford says, "a shallow bowl or cup, usually without a stand or foot, in which they drew [a liquid] out of the crater or goblet." It is as if these angels drew from the "wine" of the divine justice in their saucers, or drinking cups, the measure of judgment for Babylon. **Full of the wrath**—As if the **wrath** were a condensed liquid.

Depot of divine **wrath** *upon Babylon—in Jerusalem* **temple,** 8.

8. **Smoke from the glory** — The **glory** was as a central fire-point, whence issued the **smoke,** or intense vapour, indicative of the actual divine PRESENCE. **And from his power**—As if within this citadel of the Lord's capital, namely, the Jerusalem temple, the concentrated omnipotence of Jehovah was gathered, charged with destructive judgment, ready to be discharged upon the devoted capital of Satan. **No man was able to enter**—The divine Presence was so dense as to exclude all entrance; was too sacred for mortal approach; too fearful for mortal safety. So at the completion of the first tabernacle the glory of the Lord within excluded even Moses. Exod. xl, 34, 35. So also at the completion of Solomon's temple the priests were excluded by the filling glory. 1 Kings viii, 10, 11. **Till ... plagues ... fulfilled** — So that Jehovah himself, within the mystic Jerusalem temple, is the source whence Babylon's destruction goes forth through the **plagues** of his ministers of justice. *They* are but the manifested forms of the secret, sacred, avenging **power** in the holy place. Until the retributions

CHAPTER XVI.

AND I heard a great voice out of the temple saying [a] to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials [b] of the wrath of God upon the earth. **2** And the first went, and poured out his vial [c] upon the earth; and [d] there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men [e] which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them [f] which worshipped his image. **3** And the second angel poured out his vial [g] upon the sea; and [h] it became as the blood of a dead *man:* [i] and every living soul died in the sea. **4** And the third angel poured out his vial [k] upon the rivers and fountains of waters; [l] and they became blood. **5** And I heard the angel of the waters say, [m] Thou art righteous, O Lord, [n] which art, and

[a] Chap. 15. 1.—[b] Chap. 14. 10; 15. 7.—[c] Chap. 8. 7.—[d] Exod. 9. 9–11.—[e] Chap. 13. 16, 17.—[f] Chap. 13. 14.

[g] Chap. 8. 8.—[h] Exod. 7. 17, 20.—[i] Chap. 8. 9.—[k] Chap. 8. 10.—[l] Exod. 7. 20.—[m] Chap. 15. 3.—[n] Chap. 1. 4, 8; 4. 8; 11. 17.

do their perfect work the central fire is burning in the temple, into which none may enter.

And now, from that awful Presence in the holy place, the commission of the **seven angels** is about to go forth. So the next words will declare.

CHAPTER XVI.

3. The chapter of the destruction of Babylon by batteries of wrath poured from Jerusalem, 1-21.

a. *The four creational vials upon earth, sea, waters, and sun.* 1–9.

1. **And**—The preparations of war are complete; (see introduction to xiv;) the officers are armed with their ammunition of **plagues;** the object is Babylon, the beast; and from the inmost holy place, where omnipotent Justice is secreted, the command for action comes forth. **Go...pour...earth**—For this Babylon is not wholly local; Rome is, indeed, with John, its primal representative, but its virtual presence, wickedness, and liability to retribution, cover the human **earth.** And so the angels receive their **vials** from **one of the four beasts** who represent creation; and the first four are poured upon the four creational points. The **plagues,** like the menaces of the fourteenth chapter, appear, at first, general, but at each advance grow in definiteness until the real object is struck with the final blow.

2. **Went**—As commissioned, from the temple, (xv, 5,) the Christic citadel. **Upon the earth**—The Babylonic land or soil; the ground element. Earth was first cursed for man's sake. Sin has created a discord between man and nature. When man comes right, all will for him be right. But, at any rate, at this crisis of judgment the creation must reflect that retribution upon Babylon. **Sore**—Like Egypt's plague of "boils." Exod. ix, 10. The broad *land* is plague-smitten, as in Egypt, for the crime of the capital. The **earth** is, perhaps, made to give forth miasms that corrupt and disease the systems of the Babylonic peoples.

3. **Blood of a dead man**—The magnificent blue and billowy **sea . . . became,** not like the crimson and fluid **blood,** still living, but black and coagulated, as being **dead.** This was fatal not only to the fisherman, the sailor, and the merchant, but to the life of every living thing in its waters. Notes on xviii, 15–19, 24. **Living soul**—Literally, *every soul of life;* that is, the animal **soul,** in which the vitality is inherent. To the power that has used the sea for oppression, the sea must pour back corruption and death.

4. **Rivers and fountains**—Like the first plague of Egypt which ensanguined "the waters of Egypt," "their streams," and "their rivers, and their ponds." Exod. vii, 19. This **blood** was a vivid image of the slaughter of the martyrs.

5. **The angel of the waters**—Note on xiv, 18. The water-**angel** might have complained at this sanguinary invasion of his domain, but he humbly acknowledges the divine justice. Note xviii, 6. Not for his own sin, nor for the guilt of the waters, is this terrible transformation; but for the guilt of man, the idolatry of Babylon.

wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. **6** For [o] they have shed the blood [p] of saints and prophets, [q] and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. **7** And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, [r] Lord God Almighty, [s] true and righteous *are* thy judgments. **8** And the fourth angel poured out his vial [t] upon the sun; [u] and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. **9** And men were [1] scorched with great heat, and [v] blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: [w] and they repented not [x] to give him glory. **10** And the fifth angel poured out his vial [y] upon the seat of the beast; [z] and his kingdom was full of darkness; [a] and they gnawed their tongues for pain, **11** And [b] blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and [c] their sores, [d] and repented not of their deeds. **12** And the sixth angel poured out his vial [e] upon the great river Euphrates; [f] and

[o] Matt. 23. 34, 35; chap. 13. 15.——[p] Chap. 11. 18; 18. 20.——[q] Isa. 49. 26.——[r] Chap. 15. 3.——[s] Chap. 13. 10; 14. 10; 19. 2.——[t] Chap. 8. 12.——[u] Chap. 9. 17, 18; 14. 18.——1 Or, *burned*.——[v] Verses 11, 21.

[w] Dan. 5. 22, 23; chap. 9. 20.——[x] Chap. 11. 13; 14. 7.——[y] Chap. 13. 2.——[z] Chap. 9. 2.——[a] Chap. 11. 10.——[b] Verses 9, 21.——[c] Verse 2.——[d] Verse 9.——[e] Chap. 9. 14.——[f] See Jer. 50. 38; 51. 36.

6. **For they**—The Babylonian **men** of verse 2. **Are worthy**—Deserving this recompense in kind. Chap. xviii, 6.

7. To **the angel of the waters** now there comes a response from **the altar.** Really, the words **another out of** are not in the Greek; and Alford truly says, that the "simplest understanding is," that it is **the altar** itself that speaks and is **heard. The altar** is cognizant of **blood.** The "souls" of the martyrs who were as sacrificed victims are under **the altar.**

8. **Unto him**—To **the sun,** and not, as some think, to **the angel. With** (solar) **fire**—A very intense expression. Note xviii, 8.

9. **Blasphemed**—Penalty sometimes admonishes and reforms, as in xi, 13; but it aggravates the hardened, as here and in ix, 21. Like the hardened Israelites of Isa. viii, 21, these sun-scorched sinners could only "curse their God and look upward."

From the four creation points the avenger now approaches nearer and nearer **the beast.** Clearly, (notwithstanding Düsterdieck's denial,) there is a distinct transition from the previous *four* vials, poured upon points of inanimate nature, on account of man, and the *three* directly poured upon the bestial throne, his Euphratean population, and his metropolis.

b. *Fifth vial on kingdom of the beast,* 10, 11.

10. Seat—More truly, *throne.* **Of the beast**—As *the throne* of God is in the temple of the mystic Jerusalem, so, antithetically, *the throne* of the **beast** should be in the citadel of the mystic Babylon. Its pride, power, and darkening are chanted in chapter xviii, 7, 8. Bold and terrible was that stroke of the angel-**plague!** From that high centre it would radiate **darkness** through **his kingdom;** and no wonder his subjects **gnawed their tongues for pain.**

11. **Blasphemed...because...pains**—It strikingly illustrates this passage to note that the papacy has grown more bold in its theological blasphemies as its political power has waned. The syllabus of Pope Pius IX, and his assumption of infallibility, were his blasphemous defiance of the modern age, wrung from the **beast** by the **plagues** upon his *throne.* Düsterdieck notes, that there is in the four vials no such limitation of the ruin to the *third part* as appears in the seals and trumpets, and so infers that they indicate the final destruction of the world. The mistaken inference arises from his not noting the fact that Babylon's destruction alone is the object of this triad of chapters; and the non-limitation signifies simply that the whole of Babylon is to be destroyed, and the destruction is to be total.

c. *Sixth vial on the Euphrates, for the kings of the East,* 12.

12. **Great river Euphrates**—Viewed here not as a part of the frame-

the water thereof was dried up, [g] that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. **13** And

[g] Isaiah 41. 2, 25.

work of creation, but as a symbol of the populations (xviii, 3) that sustain Babylon and **the beast.** Note ix, 14. This symbol is drawn from a signal passage in profane history. When Cyrus the Great came with his mighty armies from **the east,** with many a king and prince in command of the various sections of his hosts, to conquer old Babylon, he found "the great city" impregnable. At length, in a masterstroke of military genius, he set his men to work to turn the direction of the channel of the Euphrates, which ran through the city. When its channel was sufficiently dry he led his soldiers on its bottom into the city, and so conquered it. So, then, the Euphrates was literally **dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.** Most beautifully does our seer appropriate this historic event to his symbolic purpose.

Cyrus is styled by God himself (Isa. xlv, 1,) "mine anointed," that is, *my messiah,* and so, if not exactly a type, is certainly an illustrative *figure* of our Messiah. One is from **the east,** and the other is from "the day-spring from on high." Luke i, 78. One conquered the literal, and the other conquers the mystical, Babylon. Here as elsewhere John's symbols are taken from sources within the biblical range. The meaning, then, is, that the population and powers of Babylon are wasted away, that **the way** of our Messiah, with his **kings of the east** leading his armies, **might be prepared** to the capture of the mystic Babylon. Alford objects, that to introduce an "auspicious event" like this here, where all is adverse, would be incongruous. But the event is very inauspicious to Babylon, and so is congruous with all the previous **plagues.**

d. *The three frogs—Antichristic rally in behalf of Babylon,* 13–16.

After six such strokes of **plagues** the Satanic powers begin to respond with warlike movement. Three bold

I saw three unclean [h] spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of [i] the dragon, and out of the mouth

[h] 1 John 4. 1-3.—[i] Chapter 12. 3, 9.

emissaries are sent forth to rally the world-wide forces to a world-wide conflict.

13. From this infernal triad—the pagan **dragon,** pseudo-orthodox **beast,** and the hierarchic **false prophet**—three unclean spirits go forth. One goes from **the mouth** of each, and so is the symbol of utterance and propagation of principles according to the utterer. **Like frogs**—Unseemly figures issuing from the mouths of the monsters, like frogs from a miasmatic morass. The only appearance of the real frogs in Scripture previous to this is as one of the plagues of Egypt. The Hebrew word for frog signifies *marsh-leaper;* and the Egyptian conception was, that he was truly *slime-born.* Hence the slimy frog well represents the *earthborn* errors and depravities of the three monsters sent into the air in opposition to the heavenborn forces bearing down upon them. And, with their dismal croaking, they are the proper missionaries of atheistic despair, and fit pleaders for a falling cause. The pagan *frog*-form comes forth from **the dragon;** and modern atheism is essentially pagan. It substitutes a falsity in the place of the true God. Sometimes, with ancient Epicurus and Lucretius, it substitutes blind law, abolishing any intelligent lawgiver. Or, with Holbach, it substitutes the great material whole, under the name of Nature as evolving all the changes we see. Or, with Comte, it makes an object of worship of what he calls the Great Being, the human race, and establishes a ritual in honor of the greatest specimens of humanity. Or, with Spencer, it imagines an Unknown Absolute, which, without consciousness or sense itself, is author of the intelligent system. The deity last invented seems to be god, Force, which produces motion, and in some unexplained way moves things into intellectual forms and operations. All these conceptions are simply the antitheistic workings of the old rebel-

of the beast, and out of the mouth of [k] the false prophet. **14** [l] For they are the spirits of devils, [m] working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth [n] and of the whole world, to gather them to [o] the battle of that great day of God Almighty. **15** [p] Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, [q] lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. **16** [r] And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue

k Chap. 19. 20; 20. 10.——*l* 1 Tim. 4. 1; Jas. 3. 15.——*m* 2 Thess. 2. 9; chap. 13. 13, 14; 19. 20.——*n* Luke 2. 1.

o Chap. 17. 14; 19. 19; 20. 8.——*p* Matt. 24. 43; 1 Thess. 5. 2; 2 Pet. 3. 10; chap. 3. 3.——*q* 2 Cor. 5. 3; chap. 3. 4, 18.——*r* Chap. 19. 19.

hous, godless spirit which transformed the first archangel into that **old serpent** the devil, here symbolized as **the dragon. The beast**—Is the power of spiritual despotism. It assumes to take the place of God in overruling the consciences of men, and thereby ruling over men themselves, to its own supreme aggrandizement. Its primal apocalyptic representative is the Romish spiritual empire, personally individualized in the pope, and brought to a climax in the proclamation of the dogma of papal infallibility. But developed by that expansion of which we have repeatedly spoken, it applies to all the great spiritual despotisms, whether Christian, Mohammedan, or Pagan, which have organized force and persecution, interfering between man and God. **The false prophet**—The lying theologian, the framer of mendacious dogmas, superstitions, and systems of error. He is often subservient to the spiritual despot, and often becomes the spiritual despot himself. And thus the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are a sort of anti-trinity. The first, as pagan and atheistic, is opposed to God; the second, as lord of a hostile kingdom, is opposed to Christ; and the third, as the spirit of error, is opposed to the Holy Spirit of truth. Alford insists that these demons are literal; but as two of them come from the mouths of symbolical beings they may well be held as symbols. Not, indeed, as symbols of "classes of men" or "sects," but of malign principles, infernal influences, and depraved systems and organisms. **Working miracles**—Or supernatural wonders, pretended or real. These prodigies are, of course, wrought through the agencies of men. The pseudo-"spiritism," or demonism, of the present day may at least serve as illustration. **Unto the kings... world**—Correcter reading, *Upon the kings of the whole inhabited world.* Chapter xviii, 3. The universality of **kings** symbolized by the *ten* horns. Neither the summons to war or the fight itself is limited to a single locality. **The battle**—A **battle** of ideas, resolving itself into perhaps a corporeal **battle,** a series of wars for centuries. Yet there may be great critical contests, or even one all-decisive contest, greatly decisive of the vast result.

15. **Behold**—A solemn warning to watchfulness against being seduced by the spirits of devils into the antichristic army. He who is "the way, the truth, and the life," steals upon us in the midst of these vain shows "as a thief;"—"a thief," not in his hostile purpose, but in his difficulty of recognition. Yet unless one **watcheth and keepeth his garments** he will be left to nakedness and **shame.** The loose garments of the oriental sleeper are easily purloined, and the victim is liable, when he wakes, to **walk naked.** His safeguard is vigilance.

16. **And he**—Rather *they*, referring to the **spirits of devils,** verse 14. It is the three demons who go as envoys to the kings of the earth, to form alliance and compact their forces against the divine invasion. **Gathered them**—The success is gained, the alliance formed, and the armies are **gathered. Armageddon**—A symbolic name invented by St. John and nowhere else found. **Ar** is the Greek form of the Hebrew *har, mountain;* and **Mageddon** is the Greek form of the Hebrew Megiddo. Megiddo was the scene of the great defeat of Sisera by Deborah

Armageddon. **17** And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, [s]It is done. **18** And [t]there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; [u]and there was a great earthquake, [v]such as was not since men were upon the earth,

[s] Chap. 21. 6.—[t] Chap. 4. 5; 8. 5; 11. 19.—[u] Chap. 11. 13.—[v] Dan. 12. 1.

and Barak, celebrated in Hebrew poetry by the song of Deborah, and thence traditionally glorious as the scene of a great victory for Jehovah. Our seer elevates it, though a plain, into a mountain, as symbol of the preeminence of the future conflict. All this indicates that the **place** is symbolical. When the **day** of this **battle** comes, the **world** will include not Europe alone, but America, Asia, and even Africa. **The cities of the nations**, verse 19, fall in the catastrophe with Babylon. We are not at all required to expect that such a contest will be decided in a single spot on the plain of Esdraelon or anywhere else.

e. *The seventh vial, on the air—the earthquake, the battle, and* BABYLON'S DOWNFALL, 17–20.

17. **And** — The great event is not given in this consecutive order. On the contrary, the tumult of the terrible conflict is reflected in the confusion of the narrative. **A great voice out of the temple**—Where the avenging divine Presence is fixed until the downfall. Note on xv, 8. **It is done**—The catastrophe is, in immediate anticipation, complete. The capital of antichrist is prostrated. Note xviii, 8.

18. **Voices** — Though the seventh seal sends forth the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet the seven plagues, the seventh plague sends forth no further seven-series, but ends with this catastrophe. The **voices, and thunders, and lightnings** are the prelude to the **great earthquake. Such as was not...earth**—For it covers all the continents and disturbs all the islands. It changes the face of the human **earth.** The seer wants words so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great. **19** And [w]the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon [x]came in remembrance before God, [y]to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. **20** And [z]every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

[w] Chap. 14. 8; 17. 18.—[x] Chap. 18. 5.—[y] Isa. 51. 17, 22; Jer. 25. 15, 16; chap. 14. 10.—[z] Chap. 6. 14.

to magnify our thoughts to its true magnitude.

19. **Divided,** by the earthquake, **into three parts**—Laid into three separate heaps. Of course so **great** an **earthquake** would leave no structure standing. The **three,** the *divine number*, intimates that it was the divine work. Babylon falls not so much by man as by God. And note that it is not said that the destruction was divinely *limited* to a third part, but that the divine destruction rested on all the **parts.** The great **battle** is a trifle to the **great earthquake. Cities of the nations fell** — All the antichristian capitals, among all **nations,** fell by the same **earthquake.** And yet by the run of the commentators it is held that Babylon itself does not fall—is only menaced and partially damaged. In view of the awful menaces and dread preparation narrated, all aimed at Babylon, we have the ludicrous result that Babylon is the only city among the nations that does not fall! **Remembrance...to give...cup...wrath**—Here we catch a gleam of **the battle.** This can mean nothing less than that Jehovah here and now accomplished the destruction to the utmost. The words xviii, 1, 2, and 8–23, are a picture of her consequent condition. **Every island fled** — Neither Megiddo nor Rome has any *sea islands* in sight. The picture is, that the continents were shaken by the earthquake, the islands were frightened **away,** and **the mountains** were leveled to the plain, or became invisible—**were not found**—to the eye of the seer amid the smoke and confusion of the earthquake, battle, and downfall.

21 [a]And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and [b]men blasphemed God because of [c]the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

a Chap. 11. 19.—*b* Verses 9, 11.—*c* See Exod. 9. 23–25.

21. **Fell...out of heaven**—As if to leave a full, last impression that the destruction was from Jehovah, a new form of judgment came **out of heaven.** These were icebergs, sixty pounds in weight, hailed down from the sky. These **fell upon men,** crushing them with their cold, solid, remorseless weight. Note xviii, 21. Yet, though the divine hand was so apparent, the survivors repented not, but **blasphemed God.** They persisted in their adherence to antichrist until the battle of xix, 11–21.

By our interpretation of this triad of chapters thus closed, it may be truly said that "we are living under the period of the vials;" apparently under the fifth. The Roman spiritual world-power, which succeeded the imperial Roman world-power, is smitten with serial plagues, and declines. Yet it grows spiritually more impenitent, self-asserting, and defiant with every successive smite. This world-wide Babylon presents itself before us here in America, claiming absolute supremacy over us, and ready for the battle; moral battle as long as the physical battle is not in its power; physical battle as soon as a sufficiency of the moral battle is won. How long this vial-period will endure we have no chronometer or almanac that can tell us. But every man of us would do well to be alert in duty so long as the contest lasts.

CHAPTER XVII.

SECOND OVERTHROW—OF ANTICHRIST'S HARLOT.

1. Picture of the harlot mounted on the beast, 1-6.

1. **And**—Antichrist's capital has fallen; but antichrist himself is not dead nor imprisoned until xix, 20; and his harlot still lives, and her destiny is not revealed until xvii, 16. **One of the seven angels**—For, doubtless, one of the destroyers is one of the best expounders of the destruction. Which of the **seven** is not clear, but perhaps the seventh, as the last and greatest. **The judgment**—John first shows the character and the sentence of **judgment** in verses 15, 16. **Great whore**—On the question whether the harlot represents pagan Rome or the papal Church, Alford forcibly says: "The figure here used, of a harlot who has committed fornication with secular kings and peoples, is frequent in the prophets, and has one principal meaning and application, namely, to God's Church and people, that had forsaken him, and had attached herself to others. In eighteen places out of twenty-one, where the figure occurs, such is its import, namely, in Isa. i, 21; Jer. ii, 20; iii, 1, 6, 8; Ezek. xvi, 15, 16, 28, 31, 35, 41; xxiii, 5, 19, 44; Hosea ii, 5; iii, 3, 4, 15; [Micah i, 7.] In three places only is the word applied to heathen cities, namely, in Isa. xxiii, 15, 16, to Tyre, where, verse 17, it is also said, 'She shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth;' and in Nahum iii, 4, to Nineveh, which is called the 'well favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts.'"

CHAPTER XVII.

AND there came [a]one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; [b]I will show unto thee the judgment of [c]the great whore [d]that sitteth

a Chap. 21. 9.—*b* Chap. 16. 19; 18. 16, 17, 19.—*c* Nah. 3. 4; chap. 19. 2.—*d* Jer. 51. 13: ver. 15.

And here, we note, it appears that Israel, though a corrupt Church, was still a true Church, and the truly pious within her limits were heirs of salvation. She was, at her worst, better than heathendom. And so of Rome. And in regard to the better side of

upon many waters: **2** [e]With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and [f]the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. **3** So he carried me away in the spirit [g]into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit [h]upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of [i]names of blasphemy, [k]having sev-

e Chapter 18. 3.—*f* Jeremiah 51. 7; chapter 14. 8; 18. 3.

g Chapter 12. 6, 14.—*h* Chapter 12. 3.—*i* Chapter 13. 1.—*k* Verse 9.

Rome, see our note 2 Thess. ii, 9. There is no fair doubt that the Christian Church appears as a woman in xii, 1. And the antithesis between the harlot of antichrist and the bride of Christ is very decisive. Note on xi, 1. **Sitteth upon many waters**—Rome on the Tiber was not seated on **many waters.** It was more true of Babylon on the Euphrates. But Rome as a commercial power, especially with those nations subject to her power, was based **upon many waters.**

2. **Kings . . . inhabitants of the earth**—The former **have committed fornication,** the latter more deeply **have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.** Such was not a true picture of the relation of Rome to the kings and peoples of the world. She conquered them by force, and ruled them by equitable civilizing force, save when her own domination required injustice. In religious matters she stood aloof, and allowed each nation its own national superstition. She was no seducer or fornicator. These qualities belong to a later than pagan Rome.

3. **Carried me away**—From the visional Jerusalem temple, where were the throne, the living four, and the twenty-four elders. These are resumed again at xviii, 1, as appears at xix, 4. **Into the wilderness**—Where she has been driven by the downfall and desolation of her capital, Babylon. That this **wilderness,** or desert, is a typical image of a condition of deprivation or *desolation* is indicated by the fact that the same Greek word, in verb form, is used in verse 16 for **desolate.** Desolate now by the loss of her capital, the nations will yet make her both **desolate** and, richly arrayed though now she be, **naked.** Having lost the real organic power of despotism and persecution, she still can glorify herself in gorgeous apparel, pomps, and display, and make proud pretensions of infallibility and universal supremacy, but of even these costly attires the **ten horns** will finally strip her **naked.** Ver. 16. Alford, however, maintains that Babylon herself was in a **wilderness,** and that this woman is that Babylon. He argues, that in the Septuagint the chapter of Isaiah (xxi, 9) from which the clause "Babylon is fallen" is quoted, is headed "The vision of the wilderness." But Babylon is not there said to be "in the wilderness," but the wilderness or "desert" is the region whence the vision sweeps in upon the conception of the prophet. It is incongruous to say that a city which was an empire in itself was in a wilderness. But we have a close analogy much nearer at hand. The woman of chapter xii was driven from her high place into the **wilderness;** and so this harlot is driven from her fallen home into a parallel **wilderness.** And what makes this certain is the following parallelism:—

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness. Chap. xvii, 1, 3.	And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain. Chap. xxi, 9, 10.

This remarkable and certainly intentional parallelism fully proves that as the bride is a pure Church so the harlot must be a corrupt Church. Pagan Rome was no Church at all. **Beast**—The **seven heads and ten horns** worn both by the dragon of xii and xiii identify this as the Roman beast of the latter chapter. **Scarlet** is the colour of popes, and especially cardinals; and Newton

en heads and [l]ten horns. **4** And the woman [m]was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, [n]and [l]decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, [o]having a golden cup in her hand [p]full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: **5** And upon her forehead *was* a name written, [q]MYSTERY, BABYLON [r]THE GREAT, [s]THE MOTHER OF [t]HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. **6** And I saw [t]the woman drunken [u]with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of [v]the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that car-

l Verse 12. — *m* Chap. 18. 12. 16. — *n* Dan. 11. 38. — 1 Greek, *gilded*. — *o* Jer. 51. 7; chap. 18. 6. — *p* Chap. 14. 8. — *q* 2 Thess. 2. 7.

r Ch. 11. 8; 14. 8; 16, 19; 18. 2, 10, 21. — *s* Ch. 18. 2; 19. 2. — 2 Or. *fornications*. — *t* Ch. 18. 24 — *u* Ch. 13. 15; 16. 6. — *v* Ch. 6. 9, 10; 12. 11.

says, "The mules and horses which carry the popes and cardinals are covered with scarlet cloth, so that they may be properly said to *ride upon a scarlet-coloured beast*." Wordsworth says, quoting the historian Platina, "Paul II. made it penal for any one to wear hats of *scarlet* except cardinals; and he gave them scarlet trappings for their mules and horses."

4. **Decked with gold and precious stones and pearls**—The pomp and glare, and lavish richness of the Romish equipage and worship, are notorious to all the world. The Italian historian Platina, quoted by Newton, says of Paul II.: "In his pontifical vestments he outwent all his predecessors, especially in his regno or mitre, upon which he had laid out a great deal of money in purchasing, at vast rates, diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, jaspers, unions, and all manner of precious stones, wherewith adorned, like another Aaron, he would appear abroad somewhat more august than a man, delighting to be seen and admired by every one." **A golden cup in her hand**—And so it was said of ancient Babylon, Jer. li, 7: "The nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad." **Full of...filthiness...fornication** — Not wine alone is in her **cup**, but drugs and philters, and stimulants to **fornication.**

5. **Upon her forehead...written**—By Roman custom professional harlots presented themselves to view with their names inscribed upon their persons. This harlot has a full and most significant inscription. **Mystery**—This word is at once a reminder of St. Paul's "*mystery* of iniquity," 2 Thess. ii, 7. He mentions, indeed, a "mystery of godliness," 1 Tim. iii, 16. But, in contrast, here is a "mystery" of profound "iniquity," of *harlotry*, spiritual and real; and of stupendous **abominations.** Of this **mystery** the present **woman** is the impersonation; it is her name; she is that **Mystery.** And, therefore, in unfolding her **mystery,** our interpreting **angel** must unfold her true character.

6. **Saw the woman drunken**—She is plainly *now* **drunken** before his eyes. But he knows it is the drunkenness, not of wine, but of **blood.** She is like the warriors of savage tribes, who seek to inflame their courage by drinking the blood of their slain. **Wondered**—What so strange a phenomenon could mean; and the angel thereupon proceeds to explain.

The Rhemish note here says, (authorized by the pope:) "The Protestants foolishly expound it of Rome, for that there they put heretics to death, and allow of their punishment in other countries: but their blood is not called the blood of saints, no more than the blood of thieves, mankillers, and other malefactors: for the shedding of which, by order of justice, no commonwealth shall answer."

2. Angel's exposition of the Beast, 7-14.

The angel will now solve the **mystery** of this **woman,** whose name is **Mystery.**

rieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. **8** The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and [w] shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and [x] go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth [y] shall wonder, [z] whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. **9** And [a] here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. [b] The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. **10** And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not

[w] Chapter 11. 7; 13. 1. — [x] Chapter 13. 10; verse 11 — [y] Chapter 13. 3. — [z] Chapter 13. 8; Matt. 25. 34; John 17. 24; Acts 15. 15; Eph. 1. 4; Titus 1. 2. — [a] Chap. 13. 18. — [b] Chap. 13. 1.

8. And first he explains (8–14) **the beast,** then (15–18) **the woman. Bottomless pit**—Or sea, compare xiii, 1. **And yet is**—Better reading, **And yet** *shall be.* The other phrases of this verse will be explained at verse 10.

9. **Here is**—Or rather, **here** *let there be.* To the interpreter who would solve what follows, let there be **mind** with **wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains**—That Rome is here meant even the ablest champions of Popery admit, such as Bellarmine, Baronius, and Bossuet, as quoted by Dr. Wordsworth, in his "Lectures." "St. John, in the Apocalypse," says Cardinal Bellarmine, "calls Rome Babylon; for no other city except Rome reigned in his age over the kings of the earth, and it is well known that Rome was seated on *seven hills.*" "It is confessed," says Cardinal Baronius, "that Rome is signified in the Apocalypse by the name of Babylon." Bossuet says, "The features (in the Apocalypse) are so marked that it is easy to decipher Rome under the figure of Babylon." Romanistic authors maintain either that pagan Rome only is meant, or that the prophecies, as applied to Christian Rome, are to be fulfilled at some future day.

10. **Seven kings**—The **mountains** have a double import; physical, representing the hills on which Rome is founded, and political, representing **kings,** or, as in the words of Daniel's prophecy, on which this is based, *kingdoms.* "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings," that is, as the context shows, kingdoms. In the despotic East the King was the State. And a beast is never a king except as one with his kingdom. **Five are fallen**—To ascertain which these **fallen** kingdoms are, we note that the present **beast,** as stated in xiii, 2, comprised in himself **leopard, bear,** and **lion,** which are the beasts of Daniel, (vii, 4–6,) traced in backward order. The present is, therefore, the "fourth beast, dreadful and terrible;" and Daniel's four beasts, as explained in that chapter, given in his order, are Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. And this is the order of the same kingdoms as presented in Nebuchadnezzar's image, in Dan. ii. And, previous to these, there were but two antichristic monarchies—Egypt and Assyria. **One is**—The five **fallen** being EGYPT, ASSYRIA, BABYLON, PERSIA, and GREECE; the **one** that now **is,** is imperial ROME. **Not yet come**—Pontifical Rome. Hence, comparing ver. 8, the beast that **was and is not,** is imperial Rome, which expired with the last emperor, Augustulus, A. D. 475. **Is not yet come**—To imperial Rome succeeds papal Rome. The universal emperor ceased, and revived in the universal bishop. When, in the fifth century, the Roman empire succumbed to the flood of the northern barbarians, and the emperor no longer existed, Rome was left with little or no civil government. Then was the period when the imperial beast **was and is not.** After this the pope came into supremacy, and in due time became the substitute for the imperial Cesar. And that stupendous spiritual Roman empire, in far greater extent than the first secular empire, stands to the present hour.

On the subject of the revival of the dead imperial in the pontifical **head,** Elliott quotes from Vitringa two per-

tinent statements from papal writers of the papal era. The first is from Augustin Steuchus, librarian to the pope, who says: "The empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the pontificate, Rome, resuscitated and restored by none, would have become uninhabitable, and have become a most foul habitation thenceforward of cattle. But in the pontificate it revived as with a second birth; its empire not, indeed, equal to the old empire, but its form not very dissimilar; because all nations, from east and from west, venerate the pope not otherwise than they before obeyed the emperors."

The second statement is from Flavius Blondus, a celebrated papal antiquarian writer in the sixteenth century, who says: "The princes of the world now adore and worship as perpetual dictator the successor, not of Cesar, but of the fisherman, Peter: that is, the supreme pontiff, the substitute of the aforesaid emperor."

And hereby was fulfilled the ancient prediction that the "man of sin," the antichrist in the temple of God, would not be revealed *until the Roman emperor disappeared.* See note on 2 Thess. ii, 6.

The tiara, or triple crown worn by the pope, is a claim that he is emperor as well as pontiff. "It was," says Baronius, "a mitre intertwined with a crown." Pope Alexander III. first added the crown to the mitre; Boniface VIII. added a second crown in 1303; and Urban V. a third in 1362. Innocent III. wrote, in A. D. 1200, "In token of spiritual things is conferred upon me the mitre; in token of temporal things, the crown; the mitre for the priesthood, the crown for the royalty." Again, "The mitre he uses always and every where; the crown not every where nor always, because the pontifical authority is both prior and worthier than the imperial." This claim to the CESARSHIP exists and is asserted to the present day. To the Roman professors who refused to officiate under the king Victor Emmanuel, Pope Pius gave each a medal of himself, saying, "Receive in reward the image of that CESAR who stands before your eyes."

Let it not be for one moment supposed that in these modern days, and in our own country, the popedom has in the least degree abated its claim to being God's vicegerent on earth, entitled as such to the absolute obedience of every human being, and of all human governments, with the right of inflicting force and bodily punishment for disobedience. Though the name of God is less frequently applied to the pope, the attributes and authority of God were never more explicitly ascribed to him than at the present day. Whatever he judges, the Vatican decree declares, "It is not lawful for any one to judge concerning his judgment." That decree declares that all are bound to obedience to him in all things, "not only that pertain to faith and morals, but in those things which pertain to the discipline and government of the Church diffused throughout the world." Besides faith and morals, whatever the pope pleases to include under the head of church-government thereby becomes subjected to his absolute authority, the decisions of which, man must not question. Romish doctors may give opinions beforehand—they may ingeniously interpret away, and, as it called "minimize" these claims—but their statements are of no value, since it is the pope alone who has authority to pronounce upon their extent, and when he pronounces all doctors must be silent. And this authority rules men who are rulers, whether kings or presidents, even over their official action. If the pope make it the duty of the American president, as matter pertaining to "the government of the Church," to execute all heretics, the president disobeys to the loss of his salvation, and under just law of being deposed from his office, and handed over to death.

Cardinal Manning expressly declared, in 1874, "The spiritual power knows, with *divine* certainty, the limits of its own jurisdiction, and it knows, therefore, the limits and the competence of the civil power. It is thereby, in matters of conscience and relig

yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

ion supreme." "And power which is independent, and can alone fix the limits of its jurisdiction, and can thereby fix the limits of all other jurisdiction, is, *ipso facto*, supreme. But the Church of Christ, within the sphere of revelation, of faith and morals, is all this or is nothing, or worse than nothing—an imposture and a usurpation—that is, it is Christ or antichrist." And as it is the pope that decides, above all questioning, what "faith," "morals," and "the government of the Church" include, so the pope is absolute over every thing over which he decides himself to be absolute. No allegiance to any sovereign can be more absolute; and when a Romanist in America swears, as he must in his oath of allegiance to our government, to renounce all foreign allegiance whatsoever, his oath is, by strictest logic, a perjury.

Hereby we see why it is that Rome determines to have absolute control of the education of the young wherever she can. It is to shape their minds to a complete subjection to the absolute authority of a foreign potentate, and render them ready executioners of the pope's decisions. Such schools are therefore schools of treason. So far from making provision for their existence, they should be held as hostile to the existence of our free American government.

That in America the Romish doctrine is that the pope is entitled to control legislation, is declared in the *Catholic World* for July, 1870, a periodical published in New York, endorsed by the pope. "All legislation in harmony with the organic law is theocratic and divine. Since justice and our honour and dignity require that we should obey God and not man, we are compelled to ascertain his will. The finger of the pope, like the needle in the compass, invariably points to the pole of eternal truth, and the mind of the sovereign pontiff is as certain to reflect the mind and will of God as the mirror at one end of the submarine cable to indicate the electric signal made at the other." That is, all legislation is to be subjected to the will of the pope as to the will of God.

And what Romanism includes under education is thus declared in the same article. "The supremacy asserted for the Church in matters of education implies the additional and cognate function of the *censorship of ideas*, and the right to examine and approve or disapprove all books, publications, writings, and utterances intended for public instruction, enlightenment, or entertainment, and the supervision of places of amusement. *This is the principle upon which the Church has acted in handing over to the civil authority for punishment criminals* IN THE ORDER OF IDEAS. It is the principle upon which every civilized government acts in emergencies, and it was asserted vigorously and unsparingly North and South during the recent revolution." That is, the pope has the same, or even better, right to execute, or cause to be executed, a man for rebellion against himself, than the civil government for treason against itself. See *Methodist Quarterly Review* for 1870, p. 633.

He must continue a short space —Or, a little while. As Alford well observes, the emphasis must be read upon **continue**, and the meaning be that of permanence. The others will have past, but he will *stay* awhile. The **space** must be measured by the scale of national history. Rationalistic commentators find in these seven kings the first seven Roman emperors. But, 1. John, after Daniel's model, uses the word **kings** for kingdoms. See our note on xiii, 2 This beast expressly embodies the last three beasts of Dan. vii, and so the last three kingdoms of Daniel's image. 2. In order to explain the king that **is**, these commentators are obliged to falsify history, and make the Apocalypse be written in the reign of Nero. And this is followed by the further outrage of making John base his imageries on a whimsical superstition of the pagan populace. 3. Under this interpretation the Apocalypse no longer round-

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, [c] and goeth into perdition. **12** And [d] the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. **13** [e] These

c Verse 8.—*d* Dan. 7. 20; Zech. 1. 18, 19, 21: chapter 13. 1.—*e* Isa. 10. 5, 7; Ezek. 38. 10.

ly and majestically closes the New Testament, as the standard prophecy, covering the new dispensation; it shrivels into insignificance, and is shaded with suspicions of imposture. It simply raises the old question of the reality of the supernatural.

11. **And the beast**—Passing from the **heads**, our angel now considers the whole **beast**. **Was, and is not**—As the predicate, **and yet is**, (ver. 8,) is omitted for abbreviation, this describes the **beast** through all his historic changes, from Egypt to Pontifical Rome. Each previous phase once **was**, then by fall **is not**, and then **is** in its successor, until the **perdition**. **The beast**, here, is the totality of the entire successional antichrist — the whole composite **beast**. **He is the eighth** — The Greek article being omitted, it should read *an* **eighth**, that is, *a sort of* **eighth**. Not an **eighth head**, for there were, as the cut shows, but **seven heads** to **the beast**. Besides, the Greek adjective for **eighth** could not grammatically agree with *head*, being of different gender. The meaning is, that it is **the beast**, as a totality, which, forming a sort of eighth individuality, finally goeth into perdition. Not one head alone—not merely all the heads—but the entire beast is destroyed. With papal Rome —the last head—all the five or six inherited by and embodied in her—namely, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, pagan Rome — all go as one whole **beast** with her as antichristianities into perdition. **And is** — Or, consists or results **of**, or rather from, **the seven**. Counted as a single *head* he is but one **of the seven**; counted as the whole **beast** he is an **eighth**. The six profane empires, traceable through and beyond Daniel's image, are all abolished in her; an abolition which does not, probably, imply the destruction of the peoples but of the SYSTEMS by which the nationalities are antichristian despotisms. When, by the power of divine truth and the blessed Spirit, rectitude reigns in every heart, governments of force, of tyranny, and of war, may cease. The inequalities of wealth even, based, as they largely are, upon the thriftlessness and vices of a large share of the community, may largely disappear. And the equalized distribution of the goods of life, with all the necessary reforms of society, according to the laws of a truly Christian social science, would prove the downfall of iron politics and despotisms.

12. **Ten kings**—That is, *kingdoms*. **No kingdom as yet**—They exist, **as yet**, (that is, in John's time,) as sections of the empire, and are not developed into nationalized independencies. **But** (will) **receive power**—Or, become sovereignties. **One hour**—One season. The Greek word may signify a season of the year; a period of human life, as *manhood;* and in John iv, 23, it covers the whole period of the duration of a spiritual christianity on earth. Alford insists that it shall here mean, literally, *an hour;* but how absurd to suppose that the concurrence of the nations with Rome should be precisely sixty minutes! The national magnitude of the matter requires a correspondent magnitude of the *season*. **With the beast**—For a period the European sovereignties will act in alliance with, and in obedience to, the Romish spiritual empire. The bishop of bishops will be king of kings. Though a large share of these **ten kings** have, since the Reformation, withdrawn from Romanism, yet Pius IX, in an address to the Italians, once said, "We three millions of subjects have two hundred millions of brethren of every language and of every nation." — *Wordsworth.*

13. **One mind**—During that **hour**, or *season*, there shall be an unbroken unanimity. The nations will humbly

have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. **14** [f] These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: [g] for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: [h] and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, [i] The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, [k] are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. **16** And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, [l] these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate [m] and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and [n] burn her with fire. **17** [o] For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until [p] the words of God shall be

[f] Chap. 16. 14; 19.19.——[g] Deut. 10. 17; 1 Tim. 6. 15; chap. 19.16.——[h] Jer. 50. 44, 45; chap. 14. 4.——[i] Isa. 8. 7; verse 1.——[k] Chap. 13. 7.

[l] Jer. 50. 41, 42; chap. 16.12.——[m] Ezek. 16.37–44; chap. 18. 16.——[n] Chap. 18. 8.——[o] 2 Thess. 2. 11.——[p] Chap. 10. 7.

give their power and strength unto the beast, as to the vicar of Christ and representative of God on earth.

14. **Make war...the Lamb shall overcome**—They shall persecute the evangelical Church, slaughter pure Christians, and raise great religious wars, but the cause of freedom and true religion will finally prevail. This is the grand note of apocalyptic triumph. **King of kings**—See xix, 16. The battle of xix, 21 is not the battle of one day, but of centuries. Its initiation is here shadowed.

3. Exposition of the harlot, and her total destruction, 15-18.

15. **Peoples... multitudes... nations... tongues** — Universal terms with the angel symbolic of the world-wide. Romanism claims to be *catholic*, that is, *universal*. She claims it as her proof of being a true Church. Cardinal Bellarmine asserts that the "first note of a true Church is the very same of the Catholic Church." His fourth note, in words remarkably similar to the terms of this verse, is, "Amplitude, or multitude of believers. For a Church truly catholic ought not only to embrace all times, but all places, all nations, and races of all men."

16, 17. When the **hour** of **one mind** has passed, and the victories of the Lamb have multiplied, a new turn shall come. The **ten horns** shall begin to **hate the whore.** Her capital having been destroyed, her power diminished, her deceptions refuted, and her character exposed, she will be made **desolate and naked. Eat her flesh**—The great body of her wealth and substance, of which the people have been robbed by false pretences, shall be appropriated to feed the poor. **Burn her with fire**—The penalty of incest, Lev. xx, 14, and of unchastity in a priest's daughter, Lev. xxi, 9. In this **woman** the harlot shall be burnt away and the bride of Christ shall appear in her place. **His will**—That she should be permitted to fill the measure of her iniquities. **The words of God**—The prophetic predictions, especially of Daniel vii.

These **ten horns,** or kingdoms, have a wonderful significance in prophecy. They first appear in the ten toes of Daniel's image, proceeding from the Roman legs of the image. Then they are verified and enlarged, Dan. vii, 7, as the **ten horns** growing from the head of the Roman beast, defined (ver. 33) as ten kings=kingdoms to be developed out of the Roman empire. Next we have the ten horns (with the seven heads) of the pagan-Roman dragon. This is repeated in the papal-Roman beast, xiii, 1, reiterated xvii, 1, and here, ver. 12, the **ten horns** are expressly defined as ten **kings**=kingdoms not yet organized, but which will come up from the Roman empire, and, first uniting with the Roman harlot, ultimately destroy her.

Looking into secular history for these *ten nations*, as emerging from the downfall of the old Rome, we are startled to find the constant tendency of the European nations to a decimal number. This is shown by earlier and later writers, Romish and Protestant.

fulfilled. **18** And the woman which thou sawest [q] is that great city, [r] which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

[q] Chapter 16. 19.

[r] Chapter 12. 4.

Elliott gives such lists by Jerome, Machiavelli, Bossuet, Mede, Sir Isaac Newton, and Bishop Newton. Elliott himself furnishes a list which seems preferable to any by his predecessors. It stays within the Western Empire; it is posterior to the disappearance of the imperial power; it is made up of Teutonic governments; it contains a *three* which (in accordance with Daniel's prophecy) impeded for awhile the growth of the power of the pope, but were finally abolished and made part of his patrimony. Elliott selects the year A. D. 531, and finds the following ten kingdoms on the platform of the Western Roman Empire: "the Anglo-Saxons; the Franks of Central, Allman Franks of Eastern, and Burgundian Franks of South-eastern France; the Visigoths, the Suevi, the Vandals, the Ostrogoths, in Italy; the Bavarians, and the Lombards—still ten in all." Of these three were nigh and obstructive neighbours to the pope at Rome; namely, the Vandals in Corsica and Sardinia, the Ostrogoths in Central Italy, and the Lombards in Northern Italy. The Vandals and the Ostrogoths were conquered by the Eastern Emperor Justinian, erected into the Greek exarchate of Ravenna, and afterward given to the pope. Lombardy held out until the eighth century, an impediment to the papal power, when it was conquered by Charlemagne and given to the Roman See. These three kingdoms became "the patrimony of Peter."

Elliott well notes that, in spite of frequent variations of number, *ten* has been the ever-recurring number of Europe ever since. To this effect he quotes Gibbon, Whiston, and Cunninghame. To these we may add that Schlegel, a convert to Romanism, in his "Philosophy of History," (re-published by Appleton,) about forty years ago reckoned ten kingdoms as constituting the modern system of Europe.

But apocalyptic thought makes provisions for world-wide extensions as time advances. The local Jerusalem, symbolized as the true Church, becomes universal, and so Babylon, as the anti-Church. The Roman-papal beast expressly includes all the preceding antichristianities in her descent to **perdition.** Note verse 11. As the apocalypse draws toward its close its geographical area seems to enlarge from the limits of the Roman empire to the entire surface of our globe. The "nations" of xix, 15, and xx, 3, 8, and "the kings of the earth" of xix, 19, must be taken in their widest extension; and it is the whole human race of all ages that finally appears before the throne. xx, 11. And we seem easily bridged over this enlarging process by the double meaning (specified in our Introduction) of the word "ten." From its literal count of the nations of the Roman empire it may emerge into its symbolical universality, and become truly world-wide. In this full sense the people of America are of the *ten* nations. And all the peoples of both hemispheres are clearly included in "the nations" after the *ten* is dropped.

18. **The woman...is that great city**—The harlot is Babylon, and Babylon is the beast, for all three are different aspects of the same one antichrist. Yet the woman survives the **city** and the **beast** survives both, xix, 20.

We refer the Babylon-symbol to the politico-ecclesiastical organism of this ever-enlarging antichristic system—a system which finds its immediate symbol in Rome as the seventh head, but its inherited totality symbolized in the **eighth.** Note verse 11. It is secular and ecclesiastical CESARISM; which, essentially pagan and atheistic, usurps the place of the true King, and tyrannizes over the consciences and rights of mankind and subjects them to the despotism of antichrist.

The harlot symbol is that unity of corrupt doctrine with corrupt character and conduct once eminently belonging to the ancient Baal system, (see note on ii, 20,) by which whoredom,

CHAPTER XVIII.

AND [a]after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; [b]and the earth was lightened with his glory. **2** And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, [c]Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and [d]is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and [e]a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. **3** For all nations [f]have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, [g]and the mer-

a Ch. 17. 1.—*b* Ezek. 43. 2.—*c* Isa. 13. 19; 21. 9; Jer. 51. 8; ch. 14. 8.—*d* Isa. 13. 21; 21. 8; 34. 14; Jer. 50. 39; 51. 37.—*e* Isa. 14. 23; 34. 11; Mark 5. 2, 3.—*f* Chap. 14. 8; 17. 2.—*g* Verses 11, 15; Isa. 47. 15.

united with dogma, became a common name for a false and corrupt religionism. This harlotry is a compound of false theology with a debauchery and depravation of mind and manners.

The organic combination falls first, has fallen, and is falling. Men are gaining freedom of conscience; and religious despotism, with its religious wars and inquisitions, is going down by force of right asserting itself. But the purification of thought and life, the banishment of false theology and of all practical depravities and vices, social and individual, is a later reformation. Its fullest earthly completion will not be attained till Satan himself is bound and banished, and the millennial reign is inaugurated.

CHAPTER XVIII.

4. Song of triumph over the accomplished destruction of Babylon, 1-24.

1. **And**—After the full completion of the account both of Babylon's fall and the harlot's destiny, our seer finds the moment for giving the triumphal rejoicing upon the victory separately over each. This entire chapter is occupied with the triumph over the capital; nearly half of the next chapter over the harlot.

The fact that most of the verbs after verse 3 are in the future has beguiled the commentators into the idea that "the great city" is not demolished in chapter xvi. Thus Alford says, "The seer does not see the act of destruction," which is in itself antecedently a very improbable supposition, and contradicted by the whole narrative of that chapter, as our notes, perhaps, have shown. These interpreters overlook the dramatic character of this pæan; the frequent preterites that remind us that the event is really past: the numerous instances in which the future tense really describes the long future desolation and woe consequent upon the past downfall; and that in a large share of the chapter the futures are uttered from the standpoint of the ancient prophets, and are simply the triumphant applications of the maledictions upon old Tyre and Babylon to Babylon the new.

a. *An announcing angel proclaims the past downfall and prospective permanent desolation of Babylon*, 1-3.

After these things—**After** John's return from his visit to the **wilderness** to obtain a view of the harlot; see last chapter. He returns, as appears by xix, 4, to the temple, the scene of chapter iv, where are the throne, the elders, and the "four beasts." **Earth was lightened with his glory**—A beautiful image. So luminous was his person that the earth was made luminous around him.

2. **He cried . . . with a strong voice**—As announcing a stupendous event! The words that were prophecy in xiv, 8, are now become history. **Devils**—Demons. See note on xvi, 14. The idea occurs more than once in Scripture—and we do not know that it was an illusion—that there are invisible as well as visible beings to whom solitudes and desolations are a congenial abode. If **devils** haunt human society, why may they not haunt the deserts? Perhaps the devils which seduced the living populations of Babylon still haunted the scenes after the populations were no more. **Hateful bird**—Averse from the society of man, and at home amid damp and desolation.

chants of the earth are waxed rich through the [l]abundance of her delicacies. **4** And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, [h]Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. **5** [i]For her sins have reached unto heaven, and [k]God hath remembered her iniquities. **6** [l]Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: [m]in the cup which she hath filled, [n]fill to her double. **7** [o]How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a [p]queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. **8** Therefore shall her plagues come [q]in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and [r]she shall be utterly burned with fire: [s]for strong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her. **9** And [t]the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, [u]shall bewail her, and lament for her, [v]when they shall see the smoke of her burning, **10** Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, say-

1 Or, *power.*—*h* Isa. 48. 20; 52. 11; Jer. 50. 8; 51. 6, 45; 2 Cor. 6. 17.—*i* Gen. 18. 20, 21; Jer. 51. 9; Jonah 1. 2.—*k* Chap. 16. 19.—*l* Psa. 137. 8; Jer. 50. 15, 29; 51. 24, 49; 2 Tim. 4. 14; chap. 13. 10.—*m* Chap. 14. 10.—*n* Chap. 16. 19.—*o* Ezek. 28. 2, &c.—*p* Isa. 47. 7, 8; Zeph. 2. 15.—*q* Isa. 47. 9; verse 10.—*r* Chap. 17. 16.—*s* Jer. 50. 34; chap. 11. 17.—*t* Ezek. 26. 16, 17; chap. 17. 2; verse 3.—*u* Jer. 50. 46.—*v* Verse 18; chap. 19. 3.

b. *Celestial rehearsal of the ancient menacing predictions, as having been now fulfilled in Babylon's downfall,* 4–8.

4. **Voice from heaven**—We might conceive this **voice** to come from an impersonation of ancient prophecy. We might suppose it an expression from the body of the old prophets in **heaven. Come out of her**—Quoted from Jer. li, 45. **My people**—Commentators, not realizing the dramatic nature of this interlude, are puzzled to know who utters this **my.** Stuart says, it is "the Saviour." Alford says, it is "an angel speaking in the name of God." But what authority for attributing the **voice** to "an angel?" Very plainly it is a celestial quotation from the old prophet who spoke the words of Jehovah. **Her plagues**—Alluding, of course, as also verse 8, to **the seven last plagues** of chap. xvi, which have passed. For even those who deny the literal totality of the ruin in xvi, 19–21, admit the priority of the **plagues** to the song of this chapter.

5. **Reached unto heaven** — Not merely in their "cry," or rumor, but in their accumulating heap, rising, like the tower of Babel, with a "top unto heaven." Gen. xi, 4. **Remembered**—A clear reference to xvi, 19; another reference to the past event.

6. **Reward...rewarded you**—A blending of Isa. lxi, 7, and Jer. li, 56.

7. **I sit a queen**—Quoted from Isa. xlvii, 7, 8.

8. **Plagues**—Note on ver. 4. **One day**—Modification of Isa. xlvii, 9. Referring here, not so much to their suddenness as to their simultaneity in the end. Most commentators understand that her **plagues** came gradually, and even in chronological order. **Death ...mourning...famine**—The united consequence of her **plagues. Burned with fire**—Jer. li, 58.

c. *Portraiture (mostly in prophetic form) of her mercantile and commercial desolations,* 9–20

It would, of course, be physically impossible for **kings** in their foreign capitals, and **merchants** beyond sea, to behold, with bodily eye, the burning metropolis, and even be obliged to withdraw to a distance (verses 10, 15) for fear of being scorched. This close grouping, however, gives us a very vivid conception. Yet under this poetic parable of commercial desolation it is the overthrow of the Babylonic antichristianity of all ages that is symbolized.

9. **Kings** bewail the cessation of the alliance of debauchery and luxury; **merchants** weep for the loss of the great market for their commodities.

ing, [w] Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! [x] for in one hour is thy judgment come. **11** And [y] the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: **12** [z] The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and [a] purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all [2] thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, **13** And [b] cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense; and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and [3] slaves, and [c] souls of men. **14** And the fruits that [d] thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. **15** [e] The merchants of these things, [f] which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, **16** And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, [g] that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! **17** [h] For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And [i] every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors,

w Isa. 21. 9; ch. 14. 8.—*x* Vers. 17, 19.—*y* Ezek. 27. 27–36; ver. 3; Zeph. 1. 11, 18.—*z* Ch. 17. 4.—*a* Prov. 8. 10.—2 Or, *sweet*.—*b* 2 Chron. 9. 9; Psalm 7. 17; Amos. 6. 6; John 12. 3, 8.—3 Or, *bodies*.—*c* Ezek. 27. 13.—*d* Num. 11. 4, 34; Psa. 78. 18; 1 Cor. 10. 6.—*e* Ver. 3, 11.—*f* Hos. 12. 7, 8; Zech. 11. 5; Acts 16. 19.—*g* Ch. 17. 4.—*h* Ver. 10.—*i* Isa. 23. 14; Ezek. 27. 29.

11. **Shall**—The speaker here adopts the present tense, **buyeth,** as if detailing what is truly now occurring over the late ruin. At verse 15 the future is resumed; at verse 17 the preterite.

12. The enumeration, though irregular, to express the cumulative character of the **merchandise,** or *lading*, as the word signifies, runs into spontaneous groups. **Gold...silver... precious stones...pearls**—The solid substances possessing an artificial value. **Fine linen...purple...silk ...scarlet**—The costly array of the wealthy, noble, and royal. **Thyine** or *citron* **wood. Vessels,** or any implements, **of ivory...wood...brass ...iron...marble**—The furnitures of most costly material.

13. **Cinnamon...odours...ointments, and frankincense**—The most refined perfumeries. **Wine...oil... fine flour...wheat**—Luxuries of drink and food. **Beasts**—Of burden. **Sheep...horses...chariots...slaves** —Or, as Stuart well renders, *grooms*. Mostly the means of conveyance. **And souls of men**—The phrase in Ezek. xxvii, 13, rendered in our translation "persons of men," is literally, in the Hebrew, "souls of men," who, as being then "traded," were clearly slaves. The same phrase is used by St. Paul, (Rom. ii, 9,) "every soul of man," in an elevated sense; and it is here used with an aggravating and condemnatory emphasis.

14. In this verse the second person **thee,** indicating direct address to Babylon, seems to be resumed from the **thy** of verse 10, having been interrupted by the list of **merchandise** in the intervening verses. **Fruits that thy soul lusted after**—Literal Greek, *the harvest of the desire of thy soul.* An *harvest* probably does not refer to **fruits,** but means the ingathering of all the above enumerated luxuries. **Dainty**—Radically means, *fat*, and is so rendered by Alford, and would then seem to refer to animal foods. But more probably the secondary meaning, derived from the smoothness of a fat surface, is *glossy* or *varnished*, and is here applied to furniture. **Dainty and goodly** may be rendered *glossy and glittering;* and that, indeed, would preserve the alliteration really existing in the Greek words.

17. Enumeration of the various marine mourners. **Shipmaster**—The helmsman who steered, and was, generally, also the ship *captain.* **Company**

and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, **18** [k]And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, [l]What *city is* like unto this great city! **19** And [m]they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! [n]for in one hour is she made desolate. **20** [o]Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and *ye* holy apostles and prophets; for [p]God hath avenged you on her. **21** And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, [q]Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and [r]shall be found no more at all. **22** [s]And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard

k Ezek. 27. 30, 31; verse 9.——*l* Chap. 13. 4.——*m* Josh. 7. 6; 1 Sam. 4. 12; Job 2. 12; Ezek. 27. 30.——*n* Verse 3.——*o* Isa. 44. 23; 49. 13; Jer. 51. 48.

p Luke 11. 49, 50; chap. 19. 2.——*q* Jer. 51. 64.——*r* Chap. 12. 8; 16. 20.——*s* Isa. 24. 8; Jer. 7. 34; 16. 9; 25. 10; Ezek. 26. 18.

in ships—Literal Greek, *every one sailing to a place;* rendered by Alford, "Who saileth any whither." Stuart renders the phrase, "Every coaster," understanding those who do not put out to broad sea, but ply from place to place on the coast. They gathered, perhaps, the commodities to be shipped in larger craft to the metropolitan market. **Trade by sea**—Literal Greek, *whoever work the sea;* as if taking care, comprehensively, that all should be included.

18. **Saw the smoke of her burning**—Too distant to see the flame.

19. **Cast dust on their heads**—The Oriental style of self-humiliation; signifying that we are but dust, and in the intensity of our emotions would humble ourselves beneath it. **Her costliness**—Her *munificence*, by which she lived richly for herself, and paid liberally to her providers of supplies.

20. **Rejoice**—The divine **voice** closes its mercantile catalogue with a lofty jubilate. The downfall of Satan's capital is a just penalty for her sins, and a salvation to the world. **Thou heaven**—From which this **voice** chanted its celestial interlude. The ungraceful **thou** is not in the Greek, which should be rendered, **O heaven.** The **heaven** addressed consists of the classes next named in the verse, whose chorister the **voice** is. **Holy**—Not an adjective, belonging to **apostles,** but a noun, *saints.* The three classes, *saints*, (or the body of Christians,) **apostles,** and **prophets,** are those in and constituting the **heaven** first named. When John wrote, in the time of Domitian, all the **apostles** but himself had probably deceased. **Prophets**—Of whose ancient predictions this **voice** is a grand reverberation. **Avenged**—For this Babylon takes in the whole line of antichristic empires, including those under whom the ancient **prophets** predicted and suffered. Thus this mournful interlude closes in a climax of triumph.

d. *Mournful picture of the silence by day, and the darkness by night, within the city home,* 21–24.

21. **And**—In the present paragraph there is not a verb in the future tense, except one, **shall be thrown down.** This is future, because it is a quotation from Jer. li, 63, 64, where a similar throwing of a stone into the sea illustrates the downfall of ancient Babylon. All the other verbs of the passage are in the (aorist) past tense. **No more at all**—This solemn expression of perpetual ruin is *seven* times uttered in this paragraph: the symbol number of absolute divine completeness.

22. The three silences—of music, of manufacture, and of sustenance. **Harpers,** on the chords; **musicians,** vocalists; **pipers,** flute-players; **trumpeters,** with rousing martial music. **Craftsman...craft he be**—Literally, *the artisan of every art.* **Sound**—Greek, *voice* **of the** personified **millstone.**

no more at all in thee; **23** [t]And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; [u]and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for [v]thy merchants were the great men of the earth; [w]for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. **24** And [x]in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that [y]were slain upon the earth.

[t] Jer. 25. 10.——[u] Jer. 7. 34; 16. 9; 25. 10; 33. 11.——[v] Isa. 23. 8.——[w] 2 Kings 9. 22; Nahum 3. 4; chap. 17. 2, 5.——[x] Chap. 17. 6.——[y] Jer. 51. 49.

23. No lamp shall illuminate the wedding chamber. **For**—The double **for** assigns reason for different things. First **for** implies *how great* the desolation; **for** Babylon's **merchants** were once princes; the second **for** implies the justice of the downfall; **for** she was the world's corruptress.

24. **Prophets**—The **prophets** were slain by Rome only as she is identical with the antichrist of the Old Testament ages, with Babylon, and even with the antichrist in the material, literal Jerusalem. And this is transparently true of the last clause—**all** the good **that were slain upon the earth.** And the fact that the Romish Babylon is type and inheritress of all the great antichristic systems, being the complete beast of all the seven in one total **eighth,** explains the commercial figures imported into this bold chant. The city is figure of the profane, spiritual, and secular antichristic world-power. The theological and moral debauchery of all the antichristic ages was identical with all their pomp and trade and commercial intercourse. Prophecy mingles them all in one, and consigns them to the same ruin. Then shall a new system arise, in which righteousness and purity shall reign.

CHAPTER XIX.

5. Song of triumph over the destruction of the harlot, (1-5;) and the coming of the pure bride, 6-10;) 1-10.

1. **And after these things**—We are carefully to note here, as at xviii. 1,

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AND after these things [a]I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia! [b]Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: **2** For [c]true and righteous *are* his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and [d]hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. **3** And

[a] Chapter 11. 15.——[b] Chapter 4. 11; 7. 10, 12; 12. 10.——[c] Chapter 15. 3; 16. 7.——[d] Deut. 32. 43; chapter 6. 10; 18. 20.

these explicit declarations of consecutiveness. The jubilations of this coming paragraph are not to be confused with those of the last chapter, which are closed. The last chapter celebrates the overthrow of the *city;* this paragraph the destruction of **the great whore.** Hence we must not (as Düsterdieck) literally identify the harlot with secular and material Rome upon the Tiber. **Much people**—Much multitude of saints and angels. **Alleluia**—Greek form of the Hebrew *hallelujah,* praise Jehovah. Its euphony in English, together with its sublime import, has made it a vocal favourite with joyous Christians. **Salvation...God**—A rapturous exclamation; rightly translated by Stuart, "Hallelujah! the salvation, and glory, and power, of our God." A trinal ascription to the Triune.

2. **Hath avenged**—In accordance with the prediction of xvii, 16, 17, that she should be destroyed by the **ten horns;** her **flesh** be eaten, and her body burned. That was prophecy: this is jubilant history. **At her hand**—Quoted from 2 Kings ix, 7. "That I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel." Jezebel is type of this harlot. Note, ii, 20. The preposition **at,** here, is in the Greek *from.* Alford well explains it: "The vengeance is considered as a penalty forced out of the reluctant hand." This is preferable to Stuart's rendering, "Hath avenged the blood of his servants [shed] by her hand."

again they said, Alleluia! And [e] her smoke rose up for ever and ever. **4** And [f] the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, [g] Amen; Alleluia! **5** And a voice came out of the throne, saying, [h] Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, [i] both small and great. **6** [k] And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! for [l] the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. **7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for [m] the mar-

[e] Isa. 34. 10; chap. 14. 11; 18. 9, 18.—[f] Chap. 4. 4, 6, 10; 5. 14.—[g] 1 Chron. 16. 36; Neh. 5. 13; 8. 6; chap. 5. 14.—[h] Psa. 134. 1; 135. 1.

[i] Ch. 11. 18; 20. 12.—[k] Ezek. 1. 24; 43. 2; ch 14. 2.—[l] Ch. 11. 15, 17; 12. 10; 21. 22.—[m] Matt. 22. 2; 25. 10; 2 Cor. 11. 2; Eph. 5. 32; ch. 21. 2, 9.

3. **Again**—A new outburst of praise after a pause. **Rose up...ever**—"The original imagery," says Stuart, "is taken from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. As they had already become a perpetual desolation, so should spiritual Babylon be." We may note that the past tense, **rose,** makes it seem as if the **for ever and ever** had passed. The real meaning seems to be, that the **smoke rose up** with a **for ever and ever,** that is, a fixed perpetuity to it.

4. To the song **in heaven** there now comes a profound response. It is from the twenty-four **elders** and from the four *living ones*, who commenced their session at chapter vi. **The elders** rise from their seats and prostrate themselves before **the throne.** They give their responsive **amen,** and a third utterance, to the *alleluias* of the **great voice in heaven.**

5. **Voice came out of the throne**—Commentators differ as to whose was this **voice, the throne.** Stuart thinks it was the Messiah; and for the words **our God,** as from him, Stuart quotes as precedents John xx, 17; Heb. ii, 11, and Rev. xviii, 4. Against this view Alford protests. We venture to ask, Why was it not the **voice** of the **throne** itself? In vii, 13, we have, "A voice from the four horns of the altar;" and in xvi, 7 there is a voice from **the altar,** which Alford rightly interprets as the altar itself becoming vocal. This would add plausibility to Wordsworth's attributing the words in xi, 1, to the "reed," which the literal wording of the Greek requires.

6. The responsive song has now come to a climax. First, there was a great voice from heaven; then, a repeat; third, a response from **the elders;** fourth, a response from **the throne;** and last, this universal voice as of **waters** and **thunderings,** in which the seer is drowned. **Reigneth**—Aorist, *has reigned.* That is, has *acted the king*—has decisively *ruled* in destroying the harlot; for that is the theme of all these responsive chants.

7. **The marriage of the Lamb**—By the association of contrast the thought turns from the *harlot* to the pure and holy **wife.** Nevertheless, the immediacy of the time-words here is no proof that the marriage of chap. xxi, 9 (and so the second advent) is literally close at hand. Even in our Lord's day on earth (Matt. xxi, 1–10) that marriage was "ready," and the invitations were sent forth. That is, men are *now* invited to the New Jerusalem, irrespective of time. And so the justification of the believer is a marriage supper, ii, 20. And so, in different stages, both the sanctification of the Church and her glorification is a divine marriage.

Mr. Glasgow, however, calls attention to the fact that the *marriage* and the marriage *supper* are two entirely different things. He avers that in every instance in the New Testament the word γάμος, *wedding,* refers, not to the marriage ceremony but to the feast, which was often some days after. The marriage at Cana was the marriage feast, not the actual wedding. Jesus, by his incarnation, became the bridegroom, (since John was the friend of the bridegroom,) as appears by John iii, 29. So that while

liage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. **8** And [n] to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and [1] white: [o] for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

[n] Psa. 45. 13, 14; Ezek. 16. 10; chap. 3. 18.—[1] Or, *bright.*

9 And he saith unto me, Write, [p] Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, [q] These are the true sayings of God. **10** And [r] I fell at his feet

[o] Psa. 132. 9.—[p] Matt. 22. 2, 3; Luke 14. 15, 16—[q] Chap. 21. 5; 22. 6.—[r] Chap. 22. 8.

the marriage is on earth, the feast is in heaven. And so here the word is not bride, but **wife**; and in xxi, 9, the word "bride" is explained by "wife," as if the marriage had passed, and the feast was to come. **Is come**—The union of the pure Church with Christ is frequently imaged as a marriage. Thus, to the Jewish Church Jehovah says: "I am married unto you." Jer. iii, 14. And in Isa. l, 1, there is divorce in consequence of unfaithfulness. Yet the completion of the **marriage of the Lamb,** in its fullest sense, is after the **great white throne** of xx, 11. For the actual final wife is the New Jerusalem, as shown by xxi, 9. And at xxi, 2, this New Jerusalem comes "down out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." And that is very decisive proof that, as the bride is the pure Church, so the harlot is an impure Church.

9. **He**—Who? The last-mentioned antecedent is, xvii, 1, "one of the seven angels that had the seven vials." And in xvii, 7, the same "angel said" all the rest of that chapter. And the same angel reappears after the millennium and after the final judgment, (xxi, 9,) and shows **the bride the Lamb's wife,** namely, the New Jerusalem; the description extends to the end of that chapter. And the next and final chapter, xxii, 1, commences with, "And *he* showed me," etc., referring to the same angel. Then, in verse 6 of that chapter, *he* evidently refers to the same angel-guide. Two remarkable points here present themselves. First, this same angel-guide crosses, officially, over the thousand years of chapter xx. Of course, in the panorama visible to the seer, the thousand years could not be optically presented, and could only be narrated. The continuity of the angel is, therefore, only the convenient continuity of the panorama. And as the seven-vial angels were contents of the seventh trumpet, so the proper inference is, that the peal of the seventh trumpet continues from the beginning of the twelfth chapter to the end of the Apocalypse; that is, from the first advent to the end of the millennium, and the opening of eternity. Second, the parallelism shown in our note on xvii, 3, between xvii, 1, 3, and xxi, 9, 10, shows not only that there is an intended contrast between the harlot, or old Babylon, and the wife, or New Jerusalem, but indicates that the immediacy of the marriage of the Lamb, indicated in verse 7 of this nineteenth chapter, is also very much a panoramic immediacy, and that it crosses over the millennium and reaches to the descending of the celestial city, which is the true wife. Hence it clearly follows, that the said immediacy does not prove a real nearness of the second advent and judgment. That is, the scene of verses 11–21 of this chapter is not Christ's personal, literal, judgment-advent. **Write, Blessed**—Here is a blessedness, as in xiv, 13, worthy of record while the world stands. **Called** — A *call* resulting from the justifying faith of the invited guest. The same hand that seals the pardon of the sinner writes his name in the book of life, and calls him to share at the **marriage supper.** Stuart supposes it to be a great difficulty that the **saints** of last verse, who really constitute the bride, are here only invited guests. But while collectively the body of saints is the bride, yet individually each saint may be viewed as guest. **True**—Both genuine, as being truly God's **sayings,** and **true** as uttering what is truth.

10. **Fell**...**to worship him**—Com-

to worship him. And he said unto me, [s] See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren [t] that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

[s] Acts 10. 26; 14. 14, 15; chap. 22. 9.

[t] 1 John 5. 10; chap. 12. 17.

pare the parallel passage, xxii, 8, 9. Our seer probably supposed his apocalypse closed, and would return worship for so great a boon. **Thy fellow-servant**—Fellow testifier to Jesus. He supplies the visible testimony, and John publishes it to the world. **Thy brethren**—Properly, the apostles who were the chosen witnesses of Christ. Note, Luke i, 2. **Testimony of Jesus**—Both Jesus's **testimony** and the apostles' testimony **of Jesus.** More the latter than the former. **The testimony of Jesus**—Possessed and delivered by the apostles. **Is the spirit of prophecy**—The same inspiration as revealed the truths of the ancient prophecy. Hence apostles and prophets are on a level, and the revealing angel was their **fellow-servant.**

III. THIRD AND LAST OVERTHROW—OF THE ARMIES OF ANTICHRIST, 11-xx, 3.

This last sublime victory is now to be achieved. The capital of antichrist was taken, xiv–xvi; his harlot was destroyed, xvii; and now comes the final destruction of all the forces and champions opposed to truth and righteousness, preparatory to the introduction of the universal reign of holy peace. That these three great successive phases of historical progress evolve through centuries, is required by the whole structure of the apocalypse, based, as that is, on the imageries of Daniel's visions. The three phases succeed in the order given, yet, no doubt, each preceding phase laps into its successor. This last—"the great moral battle of the world"—doubtless in a measure includes the preceding two, and carries the whole process of advancing knowledge, truth, and righteousness to the millennial culmination.

On this important passage we may note, 1. We do not agree with Alford in identifying the rider of the **white horse** here with that in vi, 2. But it conclusively follows, that if that is symbolical, so is this. There is no more reason for supposing the personage is corporeally "present" in one case than in the other. 2. Nor is there any more reason for supposing a corporeal riding out of heaven on a literal live **horse** here, than to suppose a corporeal dragon in chap. xii, flung by Michael from the sky to the ground. That downfall is, no doubt, allusively drawn from the pre-terrene fall of the angels; just as this is drawn allusively from the real post-terrene second advent yet to come. The dragon is a real person, namely, Satan; yet this, his phenomenal apparition, is a symbol; just so the Messiah is a real person, while this, his phenomenal presentation, is a symbol. And so fallacious is Gebhardt's argument, that the man-child's ascension was real, and so, therefore, this descent of the same must be literal. The man-child was real, but his infantile snatching up, in chapter xii, was symbolical, based on his real ascension. See notes chap. xii. 3. The phantasy that this is a picture of Christ's real coming to "judge the quick and dead," is contradicted on the entire face of the passage, and by every detail of its particulars. It is not a judicial scene, but a military. It is not a court, but a battle. The leader is not here a judge in the judiciary sense, but a general and a conqueror. Can it be for one moment seriously believed that there will be *literal horses* in heaven, on which Christ and his saints will sit astride, and ride down to the earth? 4. What confirms this view is, that it is the last battle in a serial emblematic war; the last third of a regular symbolic campaign. The enemy's capital has been captured, his harlot has been exposed and destroyed. But the chief leaders—the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet—with their armies, are yet in the field. This is simply a clear narrative, under due symbol guise, of their overthrow, arrest, and consignment to

11 [u] And I saw heaven opened, and behold [v] a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called [w] Faithful and True, and [x] in righteousness he doth judge and make war. **12** [y] His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, [z] and on his head *were* many crowns; [a] and he had a name

[u] Chap. 15. 5.—[v] Chap. 6. 2.—[w] Chap. 3. 14.—[x] Isaiah 11. 4.

[y] Chap. 1. 14; 2. 18.—[z] Chap. 6. 2.—[a] Chap. 2. 17; verse 16.

durance vile. 5. What settles this view finally and conclusively is, the fact that at the close of the battle and the imprisonment of the last great rebel, (xx, 3–6,) we have the trophies of victory and the repose and full enjoyment of conquest. The world is cleared of rebels and devils; the imparadised martyr "souls" are enthroned with Christ in exaltation, and rule over its broad area; and for a symbolic thousand years not a traitor dares lift a warlike head. When, at the close of that period, the ancient rebel re-rebels, the world's status is fixed forever. The grand judicature takes place, and the portals of eternity are opened. 6. This picture is, then, symbolical. The horses and the riders on horseback are the impersonations of the cause, and of the champions of truth, righteousness, and human happiness, headed by Him who is the Word of God, the Truth itself. His enemies are the agencies of evil, the obstructive forces to the Gospel, to human progress, to universal Christianization, peace, and civilization. But the leader in the advance is divine; heavenly auxiliaries form his retinue; the enemies are paralyzed, and victory crowns the day. If any one doubts whether this battle of right against wrong, of the true against the false, of Christ against antichrist, is really in hopeful progress, let him consider a few facts.

Three or four centuries ago this our American continent was covered with the howling forests, inhabited by savage pagans, with their horrid Satanic rites and diabolical cruelties. It is now being overspread with churches, schools, and universities. At that time the sea was navigated by a feeble craft, and liable to be overrun with piracies. Europe was wrapped in ignorance, the press was uninvented, Christendom was ruled by the absolute pope, and yet the Turks were threatening Vienna, with a great possibility of establishing Mohammedanism as the religion of the western world. Asia was ruled by pagan or Mohammedan, and locked against all Christian missions, had there been life enough in Christianity to send one. Africa was an unexplored pagan blackness. And thus two or three centuries ago the four quarters of the globe were covered with a solid midnight, save a few rays of twilight dawn in Europe. Picture as great a change for the better through our next three centuries, and say if the heavenly battle is not in progress! Thus is our Apocalypse the book of hope and triumph.

11. **Heaven opened** — The seer, expecting the apocalyptic exhibition closed at verse 9, is magnificently surprised as he looks upwards and beholds the visible firmament opening, and through its portals the divine array descending to the earth. **White horse**—Note on vi, 2. **Faithful and True**—Being the **faithful** impersonation of *truth*. **In righteousness**—Thus he is living truth and **righteousness**. And in that cause does he **judge and make war**. Yes, he does **judge**, and is **judge**, in the broad Scripture sense of king; but this is not his *judicial* action. That appears in xx, 11. **Make war**—He so overrules the wars of the world as to bring out the ultimate triumph of right.

12. **Eyes...fire** — Note on i, 14. Dazzling to the view, searching and omniscient in their glance. No enemy can deceive him, no secret lurk from him, no fugitive escape him. **Many crowns**—In correspondence with his being (verse 16) **king of kings and Lord of lords. Name...no man knew** — So the Jewish high priest wore on his forehead the **name** of Jehovah, which none but the high priest might utter. Perhaps the present words mean that Christ is Jehovah.

written, that no man knew, but he himself. **13** [b]And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called [c]The Word of God. **14** [d]And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, [e]clothed in fine linen, white and clean. **15** And [f]out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and [g]he shall rule them with a rod of iron: [h]and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. **16** And [i]he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, [k]KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

b Isa. 63. 2, 3.—*c* John 1. 1; 1 John 5. 7.—*d* Chap. 14. 20.—*e* Matt. 28. 3; chap. 4. 4; 7. 9.—*f* Isaiah 11. 4; 2 Thess. 2. 8; chap. 1. 16; verse 21.—*g* Psalm 2. 9; chap. 2. 27; 12. 5.—*h* Isa. 63. 3; chap. 14. 19, 20.—*i* Verse 12.—*k* Dan. 2. 47; 1 Tim. 6. 15; chap. 17. 14.

Otherwise the meaning may be, that there are depths—there is a secret—in the nature of Christ, which none can fathom save his self-conscious self.

13. **A vesture dipped in blood**—The allusion may be to Isa. lxiii, 1, 2, where a warrior comes from Bozrah, with garments "dyed," that is, "sprinkled," with blood. But here the word **dipt**, *βεβαμμένον*, suggests that there may be an allusion to his own atoning **blood.** This view lies in close connexion with his gospel name next given, and with the white raiment of the **armies,** next verse. **His name**—Known to the world as his gospel name. **Word of God**—The incarnate *expression* to men of the divine nature. Hence a name of truth, of revelation, and of salvation. And so our John says in his Gospel, i, 14, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us ...full of grace and truth." **The armies**—Namely, of martyred, disembodied spirits; **the souls** once under the altar, vi, 9–11; then, on Mount Zion, with the Lamb, xiv, 1–5; next, here; and finally, as **the souls** of xx, 4. **Fine linen**—The righteousness of the saints, verse 18. **White**—The leader is arrayed in red; **the armies** are in **white.** They are whitened by his crimson. They bear no carnal armour; they are the **white** warriors for purity and peace.

15. There is but one **sword** in the **armies,** and that belongs to the leader. And it brandishes not from his hand, but from **his mouth.** The image blends the double thought of conversion and destruction. See note on i, 16. Here is verified the truth of our note on St. Paul's (2 Thess. ii, 8) "whom the Lord shall destroy with the spirit of his mouth." Here it is the spiritual power going forth from the lips of the Word of God that overthrows the power of antichrist. At xx, 9, 10, that same antichrist will be not only *overthrown* but *destroyed* "by the brightness of his coming." **Smite the nations**—But not *destroy.* On the extent of these **nations** see note, xvii, 16. **Rule them**—Literally, **shall** *shepherd* **them.** He guards and controls them as the sheep of his pasture. But his crook is a powerful, or benevolently despotic, one. It is a **rod** (or sceptre) **of iron**—It rules with exactness, and those unyielding to its sway receive its destroying stroke. **Treadeth the wine-press**—The ruddy image of carnage and destruction.

16. **On his vesture...thigh**—On his **vesture** overspreading his **thigh. King...lords**—Great sovereigns, like those of Persia, who had kings and viceroys for their vassals, were accustomed to display this title. But none but He who here wears it is entitled to its universal extent. The arts and forces of war are now in the hands of our Christian civilization. This began to be the fact when Charlemagne subdued the savage Saxons, and brought the peace and unity upon which the modern civilized system has been based. It was the fact when Charles Martel drove back the tide of Mohammedan invasion. Christian preëminence is now slowly, yet with increasing rapidity, spreading Europeanism over Asia, and invading, from all sides, the "dark continent" of Africa. And the Protestant power is through every decade overmastering the forces of the

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying [l] to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, [m] Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; **18** [n] That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men*, *both* free and bond, both small and great. **19** [o] And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. **20** [p] And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and [q] them that worshipped his image. [r] These both were cast alive into a lake of fire [s] burning with brim-

l Verse 21.—*m* Ezek. 39. 17.—*n* 1 Sam. 17. 44, 46; Jer. 7. 33; Ezek. 29. 5; 39. 18, 20.—Ezek. 38. 8, 18; Dan. 7. 21; Joel 3. 9, 14.

o Chapter 16.16; 17. 13,14.—*p* Chapter 16.13,14.—*q* Chapter 13.12,15.—*r* Chapter 20; see Dan. 7. 11.—*s* Chapter 14. 10; 21. 8.

papacy. Who does not know that a higher Christian civilization, either by war or peace, must overspread America within a century or two more? All this because Messiah *shepherds* **the nations with a rod of iron.**

17. **And** — A sublime taunt now upon the dark and puny enemies of advancing truth and righteousness. There will be, not a battle, but a feast for the birds of the air. The onward wheels of progress towards the millennium will crush all opponents on the track. **Angel standing in the sun** —A most splendid image. The **sun** is a large, luminous orb, in which the **angel**-form stands like a picture in a radiant circular frame. The **sun** is a favourite and goodly emblem. Its **angel** is on the side of the Prince of Light. **Cried...to all the fowls**— As lord of the firmament the birds of the air are his subjects, and obey his call; especially a call so welcome as this. **Midst of heaven**—The midheaven, space between heaven and earth, for **all the fowls that fly. The supper**—The principal meal of the day; banquet.

18. **Eat the flesh**—The enumeration takes in the army ranks, **kings, captains,** that is, chiliarchs or commanders of a thousand, our colonels: **mighty men,** powerful fighters, and the entire cavalry, that is, doubtless, the whole army. To these are added **all men;** the **men** in italics is not in the Greek. It means **all** adherents to the side of old darkness.

It is to be noted, very specially, that the living **nations** are not cut off by this massacre. In verse 15 it is said that he will **smite,** but not destroy, **the nations;** in xx, 3 it is said Satan is shut down that he should not deceive **the nations;** and in xx, 8, at close of the millennium, Satan does go forth to deceive **the nations.** It is demonstration then, that through this battle, and through the millennium, and until the **great white throne** of xx, 11, there is an uninterrupted roll of the successive generations of **the nations.**

Flesh of kings—To show the rich variety of **the supper, flesh** is repeated at each enumerated rank; and the word **flesh** is, in fact, in the Greek, plural; thus taking in the individuals of every rank. **Horses, and of them that sit on them**—The cavalry, probably including the whole army, as both armies seem to be on horseback.

19. **And** — Though the adverse armament and array seem to be fearfully great, the battle seems to be no battle. **Make war**—Nobody seems to be slain of the **armies of heaven.**

20. Capture of the adverse leaders. **The beast** and **the false prophet**— The latter the two-horned lamb, and so clearly an ecclesiastical deceiver. In **the false prophet** the entire pseudo-spiritual body (the image of xiii included) as the corrupt spokesmen of a corrupt Church are individualized as a single person. **Lake... brimstone** — Note on xx, 14, 15. **Alive** — Not **slain,**

stone. **21** And the remnant [t] were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: [u] and all the fowls [v] were filled with their flesh.

CHAPTER XX.

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, [a] having the key

[t] Verse 15.—[u] Verses 17, 18.—[v] Chap. 17. 16. —[a] Chap. 1. 18; 9. 1.

of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. **2** And he laid hold on [b] the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, **3** And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and [c] set a seal upon him, [d] that he should deceive the nations no

[b] Chap. 12. 9; see 2 Peter 2. 4; Jude 6.—[c] Dan. 6. 17.—[d] Chap. 16. 14, 16; verse 8.

like the **remnant** of next verse. As both these personages are allegorical, we may be at a loss, at first, what can be meant by their being cast into Gehenna. But the thought appears to be, that hell is the final receptacle of all that is essentially evil, whether persons, systems, or principles, whether personal or abstract; just as the bottomless pit, (ix,) is its source. It is not said (xx, 10) that these two were **tormented** as the dragon is.

21. **The remnant**—The non-military adherents of antichrist. **Slain**—And so not **cast into the lake of fire** until after the day of judgment, xx, 11–15. **With the sword**—One divine weapon does the whole work. **Fowls . . . flesh**—The great **supper** is served; the very substance of the enemies of truth and righteousness is borne to the four points of the compass by God's aerial servitors. Of the triad of leaders the last and greatest remains to be disposed of. That part is, unhappily, severed from this by the wrong division of chapters.

CHAPTER XX.

4. Capture of the real antichrist — Satan, and his thousand year imprisonment, 1–3.

1. **And**—See last note. Of course, no intelligent reader imagines that **an angel** with real metallic **chain** lays corporeal hand upon Satan's body. The **angel** is the going forth of divine power energizing the moral and spiritual forces repressive of sin and Satan. **Chain**—The decisive check upon infernal agencies over man.

2. **Laid hold on**—Doubtless a true restraining force on the very person of Satan. **Dragon . . . Satan**—Same accumulation of epithets to identify the world's great villain as in xii, 9. **Bound him**—A release of men from all demoniac temptation or instigation.

3. **Bottomless pit**—See note on ix, 1. Why are the beast and false prophet (xix, 20) said to be cast into the **lake of fire,** the final doom of all the wicked, and Satan only into the "bottomless pit?" The reason we would suggest is this: The former two are not real personages, but only principles or organisms which arise in human history, (really originating from that **bottomless pit,** see notes on chap. ix,) and so are consigned to their finality; whereas, the latter is a real being, whose life-history commences before the creation of man, who procures the human fall, and is, therefore, destined by the divine order to receive his finality when the period of human history is closed at the final judgment. **Set a seal upon**—So that he cannot break out without breaking the seal. **Deceive the nations no more**—Hence, **the nations** are still in existence, and blessedly exempt from all infernal influences. The bottomless pit of chapter ix is closed up, and the demon-locusts fly no more. The prince of the power of the air no longer works in the hearts of men, rendering them children of disobedience. A blessed *negation* of evil forces—an abolition of depraving influences—is now established. So that whereas a Christian civilization of an impure kind has heretofore been extending itself over the world, that Christian civilization is itself now be-

more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw [e] thrones, and they sat upon them, and [f] judgment was given unto them: and *I saw*

[e] Dan. 7. 9, 22, 27; Matt. 19. 28; Luke 22. 30.—[f] 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3.

coming purer and far holier. This is, however, to a great degree of a *negative* character. Great oppressions, injustices, impurities, falsities, and corruptions, are disappearing. But there are needed yet the positive blessed influences of the reign of Jesus and his paradise over the earth to kindle the heart of the world with the glow of a sublime piety. Those come in the next paragraph. **Must be loosed**—It is the divine order that he be permitted to show himself worthy of his final doom.

RESULT OF OVERTHROWS—THE THOUSAND-YEAR REPOSE OF VICTORY AND REIGN—THE MILLENNIUM, 4-6.

4. **I saw thrones**—An inauguration of a new and better regimen over the world. The infernals being cast out, the celestials, with benign influences, are crowned as kings. Where John **saw** the **thrones** he does not say; but, apparently, they should be in the firmamental heaven, where once (chap. xii) the dragon reigned. And this would represent the place of spiritual natures. Notes on Eph. ii, 2; iv, 9. **And they sat upon them**—Namely, those who **reigned** in the latter part of the verse, the **souls** of the martyred in the battles with antichrist. **Judgment**—The authority to judge, or, according to Scripture sense, to *rule*, **was given them.** Herein is more completely fulfilled the symbolic promise to the twelve that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging, that is, *ruling*, the twelve tribes of Israel. Matt. xix, 28. But we see no judging of angels (1 Cor. vi, 2, 3, where see note) here. **The souls**—Not bodies. As it was antichristic spiritual beings who have been dethroned, so it is Christic spiritual beings who are now enthroned. Satan and his angels have

[g] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and [h] which had not worshipped the beast, [i] neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their

[g] Chapter 6. 9.—[h] Chapter 13. 12.—[i] Chapter 13. 15, 16.

heretofore ruled; Christ and his saints shall rule now. In both cases *the rulers are spiritual, in the spiritual region*, that is, in the spiritual atmosphere overlying the earth, and ruling its populations with spiritual influences and sway.

It was these same martyred **souls** whom the seer beheld, under the fifth seal, (vi, 9,) lying under the altar, in sad suppression beneath the despotism of the persecutor, calling for retribution and bidden to wait awhile. They have waited; their number is fulfilled, and their regal time has come. This exaltation is the glorious reversal of that humiliation. They were victims then—they are kings now. The order of strata is reversed; those who were then underlying are now overlying. But in both cases they are **souls,** not bodies. In other cases, where the *soul* signifies the whole person, the idea of disembodied soul is excluded by the narrative, as in Acts xxvii, 37. But here, and in vi, 9, they are the **souls** of *dead men;* of persons **beheaded** with the axe. And the Greek word for **beheaded** is not in the aorist tense, which would imply that the fact was transient, but the *perfect*, which implies the continuance of the dead condition of the body. Whatever the *soul* of a living man may be, the *soul* of a dead man must be a disembodied *soul.*

We trace **the souls** under the altar of vi. 9, through their history to this verse. We find them among the hosts on Mount Zion with the Lamb, in xiv, 1–4, where they are in the Lamb's retinue, following him wherever he goeth, chanting a future victory over Babylon, but not yet *reigning.* We find them in **the armies of heaven,** xix, 14, (where see note,) who fight

foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and [k] reigned with Christ

[k] Rom. 8. 17; 2 Tim. 2. 12; chapter 5. 10.

the great battle. We find them here, the exalted, inaugurated trophy of that victory, reigning with the Great Victor. **They lived** — They were endowed with the element of *glorified vitality;* by which they surmount and overcome the power of the second death, verse 6. This is the true resurrection of **souls.** What is the nature of this *life?* It is the same *life* as occurs constantly in these last chapters of Revelation in the phrases *book of life, tree of life, water of life, river of life, word of life, eternal life, life.* It is the paradisiac life; by which, over and above the mere conscious existence of the soul, or even its regenerate life in this world, it glows with bliss, and expands into an immortal growth and beauty; the principle of celestial *life* implanted by Christ in the glorified spirit.

The primal sentence, *thou shalt surely die,* included the fulness of death upon the whole man, and upon his everlasting being. That "die" manifests itself, indeed, in the body, by decay and dissolution, which is *the first death;* it manifests itself in the soul by spiritual depravity and eternal destruction in the world to come, which is *the second death.* By Christ both these deaths may be reversed; first, by a revival of the *soul* to a prospective celestial life here, to be exalted and continued in a glorified spiritual state hereafter, which is *the first resurrection;* and by a revival and reorganization of the *body* to an eternal union with the soul, which is *the second resurrection.* Thus, the first resurrection is a resurrection of **souls,** the second a resurrection of bodies.

Nor are we quite alone in this interpretation. Grotius, in his commentary upon the passage, says, "The **souls** which are in hades are not all said (ζῆν) *to live;* but those only which are translated to beneath *the throne of glory,* as the Jews say; for *so they call the perfected state of souls before the universal resurrection.*" Upon the words **οὐκ ἔζησαν**, *they lived not,* he remarks, "That is, they remained in hades in that state which was according to the life which they had lived on earth."

That the blessed souls were said by the Jews to *live* this paradisiac *life* in this intermediate state (located by them as *under the throne of glory*) the following beautiful passages from eminent doctors of the Jewish Church will show, for which we are indebted to Schoettgen's *Horæ Hebraicæ.*

Midrasch Coheleth, (fol. xc, 4,) commenting upon the biblical words, "for the living know that they must die," says: "They are meant who, even in death, are called *living.* 'But the dead know not any thing.' The impious are meant, who, even while active in life, are called dead. Whence we prove this: that the just, even in death, are called *living.*" Jalkut Simeoni, (part ii, fol. cix, 3:) "No difference is there between the just, *living* or *dead,* except that they differ in name." Synopsis Sohar, (p. 138, n. vii:) "Jacob our father, and Moses our teacher, upon whom be peace, are not *dead;* and so all who are in their perfected state, because the true *life* consists of this. Although it is written of them that they are dead, this is to be understood in respect to us, not to them."

That the blessed intermediate state is called *under the throne of glory* appears as follows: Schoettgen, upon Rev. vi, 9, "Souls under the Altar," quotes Sohar Chadasch, (fol. 22, 1.) Said Rabbi Jacob, "All the souls are taken from under the *throne of the glory of God,* that they may (at the resurrection) resume their body, as a father takes his child."

The same upon Sol. Song viii, 1: "By vine is meant the righteous soul, which in heaven is planted under the *throne of glory.*" In another place, "How loved by God is that soul which is taken from under the throne of God's glory—from the holy place—the land of the living."

Schoettgen also shows that the same *throne of glory* was the place of the Messiah in his exaltation. "Messiah

a thousand years. **5** But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrec-

was to be descended from the fathers, and in human flesh to redeem us; then he was in the same to occupy the *throne of glory*."—Vol. ii, p. 439.

From these extracts the meaning of this language from an ancient Jew is plain. The disembodied spirits of the saints being in the perfected state, are said, in contradistinction to the wicked, *to* LIVE, and *to live with the glorified (Christ) Messiah.* This is the same with the abode of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom; the same as the "being absent from the body" and the "being present with the Lord" of St. Paul; the same as the being in paradise with Christ of the penitent thief; and the same as the life and reign of souls of St. John.

Reigned—Became the overlying, controlling, spiritual power over **the nations** of the earth, as Satan and his angels once were. **With Christ**—Yet all their victory and reign is in unification with the Redeemer. As they fought his last battle through his one **sword,** so they *reign* through his one sceptre.

This picture of living and reigning **souls,** however, is given (like the **mountains** of xvii, 9) as a double symbol, or more properly, as a *symbol* and a *specimen.* As a *symbol* the **souls** stand to represent the victory over antichrist. Hence only those who are martyred in that war seem to be made visible. As a *specimen* they serve to show the true nature of **the first resurrection;** that is, the glorified triumphant state of the imparadised disembodied spirits, in the glorified side of hades, who have won the battle of life, and await in bliss, incomplete yet wonderful, for the second resurrection. Hence, as a specimen of the nature of the first resurrection, though these alone are in the foreground and visible, yet all the spirits of the departed just, though in the background, are by right and just implication there. Hence, we look to this passage as describing the blessedness of all our departed brethren who have passed

through the portals of death to the land of blessed spirits. It is to this blood-washed throng that we hope to go from our death-bed in Christ. See our article, on "The Millennium of Revelation xx," in the "Methodist Quarterly Review" for January, 1843, for a full discussion of this whole subject.

5. **The rest of the dead**—**The rest** are those who live not in this *first resurrection life.* **Lived not again**—The word **again** must be stricken out as a false reading. It is unquestionably spurious. We have then only **the rest of the dead lived not. This**—The Greek for **this** grammatically agrees with **resurrection.** So that, literally, we have: **this** (resurrection) **is the first resurrection.** Or, (as Alford,) making **this** the predicate, **the first resurrection is this** (resurrection. In either case **this resurrection** refers to the living of the **souls.** This imparadised life is the life of **the first resurrection.** This circumscribes and fixes the meaning of the word **lived.** It was not merely the soul's regenerate life in this world, or the soul's life of the dead, who are not in this **first resurrection.** It is the soul's first-resurrection life. The life of **souls** is the first resurrection: the added life of bodies is the second. **Until the thousand years were finished**—This does not imply that **the rest of the dead** did live after the close of **the thousand years.** The Greek words ἄχρι and μέχρι both signify **until,** but with a difference. The latter would determine that the *not living* (or any other affirmed condition) ceased at the end of the period. The former only affirms that the said condition lasted for so long, without affirming whether it lasted longer or not. It is the former that is used here. The not living of **the rest** lasted for a thousand years; and then—he will tell us what happened. Namely, they were put into a condition by which they never could attain the first resurrection life, but did remain under **the**

tion. **6** Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such [l] the second death hath no power, but they shall be [m] priests of God and of Christ, [n] and shall reign with him a thousand years.

l Chapter 2. 11; 21. 8.—*m* Isa. 61. 6; 1 Pet. 2. 9; Chap. 1. 6; 5. 10.—*n* Verse 4.

power, and finally sink into the condition **of, the second death.**

There are numerous instances of this use of the word **until.** Psalm xc, 1: "Sit thou at my right hand *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool," and then sit there forever. 1 Sam. xv, 35: "Samuel came no more *until* the day of his death," and no more after that. Rom. xv. 13: "*Until* the law sin was in the world," and after the law also. And so, the rest lived not until the millennium ended; nor then either.

Our note here thus far assumes the genuineness of the sentence, **But the rest . . . finished;** but Glasgow shows that the entire sentence is spurious. For, 1. It is wanting in the oldest New Testament manuscript, the Sinaitic, and in the Syrian version, dated from commencement of sixth century. 2. There is a suspicious number of variations in copies containing the sentence. There are three variations in the Greek of the words **but the rest;** three variations of the word for **lived;** two for **until.** These indicate that the words were interpolated in the copies containing the sentence, not wrongly omitted in those not containing it. 3. The sentence, like an interpolation, interrupts the current of the style. It breaks in between the next word, **this,** and the antecedent to which its affirmation refers. The sentence reads like an explanatory note by some copyist, which has been wrought into the text, and that in a very awkward position. We may add, that until the discovery of the Sinaitic Codex, this sentence has been considered by the corporeal interpreters of the **lived** of verse 5, as their stronghold. But no sound biblical scholar will now consider it worthy reliance as a main proof of so stupendous a theory.

6. Our seer now specifies the nature of the life of this **first resurrection.** Over that high and unique vitality **the second death hath no power.** By the first resurrection *we are raised from beneath the power of the second death to above the power of the second death.* This is initiated at our earthly regeneration, but it is not completed until the glorification of our spirits. Our **souls** pass through as true and literal a resurrection as our bodies; and it is by that resurrection of our **souls** that they become a fitting unity with our resurrection bodies. We might, perhaps, more truly say that it is by the resurrection and glorification of the body that it becomes fit for unification with the resurrect soul. Or, stronger still, it is by its own **first resurrection** that the blessed soul brings the raised body to a fitting unity with itself. It is the soul that glorifies the body. And thus soul and body both pass through each its literal resurrection to the final glorious unification. The first resurrection is, therefore, a resurrection of **souls;** the second, of **bodies.**

A thousand years—As we are here still in the land of symbol, there is ample reason for applying the symbolic interpretation to this number. We have the number of universality, *ten,* raised to a cube, and producing, on the year-day principle, 360,000 years. The 1260 years of antichristic rule dwindle thereby to an insignificant extent in comparison with the earthly reign of Christ. Glasgow well says, "Against the hypothesis of the contracted millennium there lies this startling objection: that it assigns to antichrist a more extended reign than to Christ. But, if the reign of Jesus be 360,000 years, and the end of antichrist or heatheiism be speedily approaching, their duration is of no moment, being, at most, about 7,000 out of 360,000, or one-five-hundredth part." We are then only in the morning dawn of human history. Progress is the law, not only in nature and in history but in the Messianic kingdom. It is not only

the few that are finally saved. Entirely correct is the inference drawn from the doctrine of the millennium by Dr. Bellamy, that the number of the lost in comparison to the saved may finally be as the number of malefactors now hung to the rest of society. See our work on The Will, p. 359.

Alford, on the passage, in insisting that this resurrection of **souls** is a bodily resurrection, makes two points. 1. If the **first resurrection** is "spiritual," so must be the second. To which we answer, If the first is not a "spiritual" resurrection, it certainly is a **soul**-resurrection; and a **soul**-resurrection is not a body-resurrection. It does not follow that if a **soul**-resurrection is spiritual, therefore a body-resurrection must, also, be spiritual. Professed "literalists" must render **souls** literally, and not figuratively, as bodies. 2. "Those who lived next to the apostles," says Alford, "and the whole Church for 300 years understood them in the plain, literal sense;" that is, forsooth, understood **souls** to mean bodies! And that is a very queer "literal sense!" This argument, based on the authority of the post-apostolic Church, comes with a bad grace from Alford, who persistently maintains, in his Commentary, that the apostles themselves, even in their inspired writings, made the sad mistake of expecting the second advent to take place in their own day. And we call the attention of our readers to *this special point:* That this very mistake of expecting the advent in their own day is *identical with the mistake of placing the advent before the millennium.* Many of "those who lived next the apostles" did make this mistake. Bringing the advent into their own day, they, of course, thereby cut off the millennium, and placed it beyond the advent, and hence arose the errors of ancient Chiliasm, or pre-millennialism. This error was not held by "the whole Church for 300 years;" but, probably, by a decided majority of the post-apostolic Church. See the whole question of ancient Chiliasm discussed in our article on "Millennial Traditions," in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* for July, 1843.

In his commentary on the Apocalypse, Mr. Glasgow has some ingenious methods of disproving the danger of millennial over-population. The fear of some is, that in 360,000 years of peace and prosperity the earth would be over-stocked with inhabitants. Glasgow first quotes many beautiful texts to prove the future increased fertility of the earth. "The wilderness shall be a fruitful field." "I will plant in the wilderness the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree." "He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her deserts like the garden of the Lord." "Break forth into joy, ye waste places." "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

The mountains, deserts, and morasses, may be, he thinks, rendered a fertile plain, and the earth become a garden by geological changes, by a better distribution of waters, and a diffusion, truly possible, of warmth over the Arctic regions. Nay, there are supposable methods by which the orb of the earth may be enlarged and furnish a larger area of life. In all which, he professedly and carefully states what *may*, and, for aught science can show *can, be;* not what certainly will be. The latest conclusion of science seems to be that the area of land is continually gaining upon the ocean.

But the most valid solution of this difficulty lies in what are now the known laws of population. In the animal creation it is found, largely, that *low life is enormously prolific, and high life chary of over-population.* The fishes spawn and the insects breed in trillions while the lion and elephant are generating a score. So also among mankind the poor, ignorant, and miserable are prolific, while the higher classes, the rich, the aristocratic, and the intellectually and morally cultured classes tend to sterility. The nobility of England would die out were it not replenished from the commons. People who have few resources for enjoyment fall back upon the animal and domestic

7 And when the thousand years are expired, [o]Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out [p]to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, [q]Gog and Magog, [r]to gather

[o] Verse 2.—[p] Verses 3. 10.

[q] Ezek. 38. 2; 39. 1.—[r] Chap. 16. 14.

gratifications within their reach. As the higher faculties find full play in a variety of directions, these enjoyments are often deserted. As the passions of mankind become regulated, fecundity becomes moderate, and a perfectly balanced race would never over-populate the earth.

The new rebellion of Satan—closed by his destruction, 7-10.

7. **Are expired**—It is interesting to note how the seer bridges us over the period of **the thousand years** in less than an hour. His own position remains the same as in xix, 4, in presence of the royal state of iv, 11. In describing the millennium, he repeatedly changes the tense; sometimes predicting in the future, and sometimes describing or narrating as in the past. **Shall be**—*Will be;* the simple future, as also in next verse. Why is Satan loosed? We might, also, ask, Why was he first permitted to enter Eden? Which resolves itself into the general question, Why is evil allowed in the universe? Why the possibility of, or the agent's freedom to, sin? Why allow free agency, tried virtue, penalty for guilt, or reward for virtue? Because a system of free-agents, a moral system, a probationary system, is superior to and better than a system of pure moral machines. But, in the present case, doubtless, an age had arrived when the free tendencies to apostasy called for Satan, as apostate Israel called for a king, whom God granted in his wrath. And if it be asked how so pure an age could apostatize, we may ask in reply, How could the first angels rebel? and how could our first parents fall? The most perfect free-agent in a scene of temptation is one with whom it is easy to keep right with care. Hence we cannot be sure that in the millennium there will be no exceptions to the general rule of holiness.

8. **Go out**—The last revelation of antichrist. It is the revelation that precedes the second advent. **Deceive the nations**—Note on xiv, 5. Probably by taking a religious form, and erecting a hierarchy and becoming a pontiff, *thus reviving the pre-millennial* POPERY. Yet, as we are informed in 2 Peter iii, one form of the deception will be a denial of the reality of a second advent, based on an infidel scepticism. And yet, while infidel to Christ and his second advent, **the nations** may be faithful to the renewed pontificate and spiritual empire of the dragon, who emphatically **deceives** them into a belief of his Messiahship. And here it may be noted, that the prefix *anti* signifies not only *opposition* but *instead of;* so that antichrist signifies not merely an opponent to Christ, but a substitute Christ; just as anti-pope signifies a false claimant to be pope. The result will be apostasy, persecution, irreligion, vice, and misery. **Four quarters of the earth**—The symbolic Jerusalem — **the beloved city** of next verse — is assumed as the centre; and from all **the four** points of the compass the hostile forces are seen advancing. That is, the true Church of the period will find itself in the midst of a growing scepticism, vice, and persecution, rising in all parts of the world, and bearing down upon herself. **Gog and Magog**—An invasion shadowed by that described by Ezekiel xxxviii and xxxix. That invasion was led by Gog and Magog from the north countries, but it received coöperation from all **quarters**; from Persia on the east, from Ethiopia and Libya south, and from Gomer, west. In the tenth chapter of Genesis **Magog** is classed among the sons of Japhet, and, therefore, represents here the Japhetites, (Caucasians,) or Gentiles. And as in the apocalypse the Jews represent true Christians—as **Jerusalem** here represents the true Church—so Gentiles are antichristic, and assailants of

them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. 9 [s]And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out

[s] Isa. 8. 8; Ezek. 38. 9, 16.—[t] Verse 8.

the righteous cause. **Gog**, according to Ezekiel, is "prince" of **Magog**.

St. John here uses imagery known to the old Jewish doctors. Thus the Jerusalem Targum upon Num. xi, 27, says: "At the close of the last days Gog and Magog and their armies shall go up to Jerusalem, and shall fall by the hands of Messiah, and seven years shall the children of Israel burn their arms." And Avoda Sara, i: "When they shall see the war of Gog and Magog, the Messiah shall say unto them, For what have you come hither? They will reply, Against the Lord and his Messiah." **Sand of the sea**—Wonderful it is how numerous are the devotees of infidelity in trying times.

9. **Went up**—These hosts from all parts **of the earth** are concentrating upon Jerusalem. **Breadth of the earth**—The earth visible to the seer is a vast surface, with **four** corners, or compass points, and over the plain the armies from every point are making themselves visible. **Camp**—The heroic body of champions and defenders of the faith. **The beloved city**—Not the "New Jerusalem," for that is yet to come down "out of heaven," xxi, 2; nor the old Hebrew capital; but the mystic Jerusalem, the true Church, the antithesis of the mystic Babylon. She is at this period the earth's centre, and upon her are gathering from all the horizon the hosts of Satan. **Fire...devoured them**—As it once did Sodom. And now is fulfilled St. Paul's wonderful prediction of the Man of Sin. See our notes on 2 Thess. ii, 6–9. This is the final *parousia* of Satan preceding the second advent. As before the millennium antichrist was consumed "by the breath of his mouth," so here he is destroyed by "the brightness of his coming"—blazing forth in devouring **fire**. Even Romanistic interpreters admit this future antichrist. Just before the **great white throne** appears antichrist is consigned to gehenna. There was no need of trial and sentence for him.

of heaven, and devoured them. **10** [t]And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, [u]where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and [v]shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

[u] Chap. 19. 20.—[v] Chap. 14. 10, 11.

10. **Beast and false prophet**—Of this antichristic triad two are allegorical persons, and the third only a literal. It might seem that *their* fate must be literal cessation of existence, and no consciousness of *torment*. The **for ever and ever**, literally taken, can only signify that for them there should never be reversal of their doom. Yet, as figurative persons, they are figuratively held to suffer, as truly as to be slain, in the last chapter; and so their doom is ideally held to be eternal. **Day and night**—Figuratively representing *ceaselessness*, even after **day and night** have forever ceased.

THE FINAL JUDGMENT AND AWARDS. 11–xxii, 5.

1. The throne, the resurrection, and vanishing earth, 11, 12.

As we approach the great finalities a change seems to be made in the mode of representation from the symbolical to the more exactly pictorial. Truths are exhibited less by representative images and more by literal presentation. But, 1. This is rather a difference of degree than of kind. A symbol is selected, usually, for some *resemblance* by which it suggests the symbolized object. A picture, therefore, is only a symbol with an increased amount of resemblance, even until it becomes an exact pictorial likeness of the object. 2. When we come to the last events, symbols grow difficult to comprehend, and direct picture becomes necessary. Even then the picture becomes the best repre-

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face [w] the earth and the heaven fled away; [x] and there was found no place for them.

[w] 2 Pet. 3. 7, 10, 11; chap. 21. 1.—[x] Dan. 2. 35. —[y] Chap. 19. 5.

12 And I saw the dead, [y] small and great, stand before God; [z] and the books were opened: and another [a] book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were

[z] Dan. 7. 10.—[a] Psa. 69. 28; Dan. 12. 1; Phil. 4. 3; chap. 3. 5; 13. 8; 21. 27.

sentation of the fact *for us*, in our present earthly state. What obliges the interpreter to view this exhibition of last things as approaching so near to an exact likeness as to be essentially a literal description of supernal events and objects is the correspondence with other passages of Scripture, which are to be held literal, unless we would lose all certainty of interpretation. John's pictures of the finality, while more symmetrically pictorial, agree with those of Christ, (John v, 25–29; Matt. xxv, 31–46;) Paul, (1 Cor. xv, 22–28; 2 Thess. i, 7–10;) Peter, (2 Pet. iii, 7, 10, 12, 13;) John, (Rev. vi, 12–17;) and James (v, 3, 7).

11. **I saw**—From what standpoint did the seer behold the **throne?** See note xxi, 5. **Great white throne**—"**Great,**" says Bishop Newton, "to show the largeness and extent, and white to show the justice and equity, of the judgment." **Him that sat on it**—"None other," says Newton, "than the Son of God, for (John v, 22) the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son." And this entire passage is to be identified with Matt. xxv, 31–46. The **great white throne** here, is the **throne of his glory** there. And each entire passage supplements the other. This excludes the great pre-millennial error of imagining xix, 11–21, to be the judgment-advent. **From whose face**—Homer's image of Jupiter sitting upon his throne, nodding with his ambrosial curls, and shaking all Olympus with his nod, has been admired for its sublimity. But how small its imagery compared with this enthroned One, from **before** whose face creation flees! **Earth...fled**—Hence, **a new heaven and a new earth** appears at xxi, 1. **No place for them**—The apparent meaning is, not that the *face* of the earth is changed and renewed: but that the very solid globe itself vacates its **place** and disappears. This implies not annihilation, but removal and departure of the **old,** and substitution of the **new.** And this seems to coincide with 2 Peter iii, 10, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise." See note there.

12. **Dead...stand**—Not that they were **dead** and *standing* at the same time. Just so it is said, Matt. xi, 5, "the lame walk, the deaf hear;" not that they were deaf and hearing at the same time: but the previously deaf now hear; and so the previously **dead** now **stand.** This presupposes the one universal resurrection (see ver. 13) declared by the Lord's mouth, as related by this same John in his Gospel, v, 28, 29. **The dead** implies the universal **dead; small and great** implies every individual. **Before God**—True reading **before the** *throne;* identical with "the throne of glory" of the "Son of man," in Matt. xxv, 31. But the received reading **God** would not contradict the idea that it was visibly **God** the Son, to whom, indeed, the office of judging is committed. **The books**—The volumes both of the human and of the divine memory. These form a perfect universal human history, read by the eye of omniscience by the light of a blazing world, in the ears of the human race. Physiological facts render it probable that the human soul never truly forgets any idea once impressed upon its memory. So Byron:—

> "Each fainter trace that memory holds
> So darkly of departed years,
> In one broad glance the soul beholds,
> And all that was, at once appears."

Besides the record-**books** of the facts of human histories—the universal particular biographies—there is **another book.** There is a "double-entry;" one of facts condemning or justifying; the other a register of the **true citizens**

judged out of those things which were written in the books, [b]according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; [c]and death and [1]hell delivered up the dead which were in them: [d]and they were judged every man according to their works. **14** And [e]death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. [f]This is the second death. **15** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life [g]was cast into the lake of fire.

b Jer. 17. 10; 32. 19; Matt. 16. 27; Rom. 2. 6; chap. 2. 23; 22. 12; verse 13.—c Chap. 6. 8.—1 Or, *the grave.*

d Verse 12.—e 1 Cor. 15. 26, 54, 55.—f Ver. 6; chap. 21. 8.—g Chap. 19. 20.—a Isa. 65. 17; 66. 22; 2 Pet. 3. 13.

CHAPTER XXI.

AND [a]I saw a new heaven and

of the New Jerusalem. The record of the **name in the book of life** decides the case, but that record is verified and sustained by **the books** of memory. **Judged**—Their eternal destiny decided. **Works**—The deeds done in the body. For there is a truth in the doctrine that we are justified by **works.**

2. The final penal award—the lake of fire, 13-15.

13. **The sea gave up**—Even while the heaven and earth are fleeing in flames before the throne, **the sea** surrenders the myriads who have perished in its waves. **Death and hell** (*hades*)—From three sources do the dead, body and soul, come forth. From **the sea** and from **death** (by land) come their bodies; from **hell** or *hades*, (the intermediate state of disembodied spirits,) come their souls. How unhappy here the term **hell** is for *hades* is illustrated by the fact that it was the abode of the blessed as well as of the unholy souls. It included Paradise as well as Tartarus. **Judged**—Solemn and emphatic repetition of closing clause of last verse.

14. **Death and** *hades*—Not personification, but the submergence of the two conditions in the dark finality is expressed. Condemnation of both is implied; for both are the results of the fall; since without the fall man would have passed into the glorified state without death or an intermediate state. **Death** is a disorganization of the man into two parts; and *hades* is a continuation of that separation and a detention from full final bliss. **Lake of fire**—The most awful thought that can occupy the human mind. **This is the second death**—Alford well says, "As there is a second and higher life, so there is also a second and deeper death. And as after that life there is no more death, (chap. xxi, 4,) so after that death there is no more life. Verse 10; Matt. xxv, 41." There is a deathless life, and a resurrectionless death.

15. **Book of life**—There was no *book of death.* Heaven has a glorious citizenship, and a glorious census-**book** of its citizens. But gehenna is an anarchy, without record and without citizenship.

CHAPTER XXI.

3. The final glorious award—the new heaven and earth, 1-xxii, 5.

a. *Visible descent of the New Jerusalem to the new earth,* 1-4.

1. **And**—The old world—this our present earth—disappeared before the approach of the judgment **throne,** (xx, 11.) The new celestial earth now forms the visional scene. Over its broad surface sin and pain are no more, and a sorrowless immortality reigns. But the greatest glory of the new earth is its central metropolis. It is not the old antichristic Babylon—quite the reverse; nor is it even the old Jerusalem, real or mystical, for that has gone with the old earth. But it is one which comes, in complete structure, down from God himself, from above the firmament. It is made up of materials the most glorious that thought can conceive. It is lighted, not by lamp or by sun, but by the glory of the present divine Essence; and as that neither faints nor fails, there is no night, but one ever-glorious day. Into

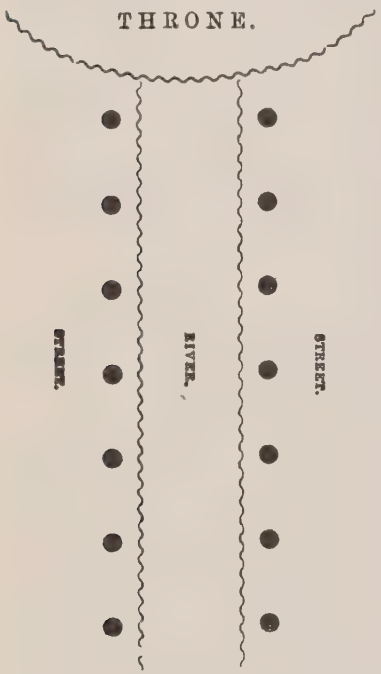
a new earth: [b]for the first heav-

[b] Chapter 20. 11.

en and the first earth were passed

this, their divine metropolis, **the nations of** the **saved** over the universal surface bring, not trade and manufactures, but their **glory and honour.**

The immortal health and youth of the heavenly populations is secured by the following divine provision. In, as we may say, the city park, is the divine **throne.** From its front goes forth a very broad street. And through the length of the street there flows a crystalline river, with rows of trees on each side. The fruit of this



tree and the waters of this river are immortalizing. And as these flow from the **throne** so the stream of man's heavenly perpetuity flows from the immortal **God.** The description, and indeed the whole apocalypse proper, closes at xxii, 5.

I saw—The narrative is continuous with the last preceding chapter. That is, it is a description, not, as some maintain, of the gospel state, commencing with the first advent and closing with the second; nor, especially, is it a picture of the thousand millennial years of Satan's imprisonment, as others maintain: but it is a shadowing of the post-judgment eternal state of the blessed, the final glorification—HEAVEN. For, 1. Such is the proper assumption. The writer's order of narration must not be changed but for good assignable reason. We hold it for a fixed law, that *the entire train of events of the seventh trumpet is invariably consecutive*, admitting of no transposition. 2. Death exists during the millennial period; for it is not destroyed until the resurrection and judgment, xx, 14. But in these chapters death does not exist, ver. 4. These chapters, therefore, describe not the millennium, but the post-resurrection and post-judgment state. 3. If these two chapters are supposed to describe the millennium of xx, 3–6, then the apocalyptic narrative closes very tamely with the eternal penalty of the wicked at xx, 15, with no correspondent description of the eternal reward of the righteous. It possesses no well-rounded close, and a required antithesis is lost. On the contrary, the consecutive interpretation closes the apocalypse and the New Testament with a glorious termination. The Bible, which opens with the fall of man, closes with the final restoration. It finishes by leading us to, and leaving us in, glory. Where should the word of salvation leave us but in heaven?

A new heaven and a new earth—**A new** land beneath, **a new** sky above. The land is seen and supposed, stretching to an indefinite extent, and capable of being, in thought, a boundless, varied plain, or even a globe. **No more sea**—Düsterdieck collects a curious variety of opinions as to there being **no more sea** in the new world. Besides those commentators who hold the **sea** to be a figurative term for *peoples*, Andreas held that the cessation of the difficulty of distant locomotion and

away; and there was no more sea. **2** And I John saw [c]the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared [d]as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, [e]the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. **4** [f]And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and [g]there shall be no more death, [h]neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any

[c] Isaiah 52. 1; Galatians 4. 26; Hebrews 11. 10; 12. 22; 13. 14; chapter 3. 12; verse 10. — [d] Isaiah 54. 5; 61. 10; 2 Corinthians 11. 2.

[e] Lev. 26. 11, 12; Ezek. 43. 7; 2 Cor. 3. 16; chap. 7. 15. — [f] Isa. 25. 8; chap. 7. 17. — [g] 1 Cor. 15. 26, 54; chap. 20. 14. — [h] Isa. 35. 10; 61. 3; 65. 19.

of the necessity of navigation renders the sea needless; Beda held that the sea would be destroyed by the final conflagration; De Wette and Luthardt, that, as the old world sprang from water, the new springs from fire; Ewald, that the idea of the abolition of the sea arises from horror of the sea in the minds of the inland peoples, as the ancient Israelites, Egyptians, and Indians; Zullig, that paradise was without a sea; Volkmar, that the sea and the abyss, or "bottomless pit," being connected, neither belong to the new state. Finally, Düsterdieck holds that St. John means simply that the sea disappeared with the rest of the old world. Heaven, earth, and sea, he thinks, departed together, and whether a new sea appeared in the new world or not is not said. Most of these opinions are consistent with each other, and we think correct. We agree with Düsterdieck, that the triad, heaven, earth, and sea, disappear together; but the special phrase, *and the sea was no more*, seems to indicate that it had no existence in the new state. This accords with the other views; of Ewald, as to the ancient aversion to the sea; of Andreas, that its navigation uses were no more; and of Volkmar, that sea and abyss alike belonged not to the new system.

2. **And I**—To our seer who has been narrating the victory over **Babylon, the harlot,** the first thought to occur is **the new Jerusalem, the bride.** But after this first outburst he postpones the city to verse 9; while he stops to tell us (3–8) something about the country. **From God**—Of this city the builder and maker is **God. Out of heaven**—Coming down from above the firmament by an opening in its vast visible concave.

3. **And**—The description of the region is dramatically given by **a voice out of heaven,** (3 and 4,) and by repeated utterances of the divine occupant of **the throne,** 5–9. Of this heavenly land the utterances declare that God himself is a present inhabitant; that no deaths or sorrows burden its divinely salubrious air. Its inhabitants shall be gifted with the water of immortality, while all transgressors shall be excluded from its pure society.

Great voice—An utterance from an unknown utterer, but from a heavenly source. **Tabernacle**—Or, tent. The allusion is to the Mosaic tabernacle in the wilderness, where Jehovah dwelt by symbol. On this **new earth** he will dwell in person. **Shall be his people**—His new, glorified, eternal Israel. For this is the heavenly Canaan, where all are Israel and all are Gentile. The "hundred and forty-four thousand," and the "multitude which no man could number" of chap. vii, are now united. The *tribes* and **the nations** are one; and all may, according to a divine order, enter into the twelve gates; yet each tribal nation, perhaps, into its own gate.

4. The present **God** makes all the happiness of heaven. It is he who will **wipe away all tears. No more death**—For the resurrection took place previously to the **great white throne,** xx, 11, and death died at xx, 14. The inhabitants quaff immortality from the river of life. **Crying**—Rather, *outcry*, from the oppression and violence of assailants. **Pain**—The healing leaves of the tree of life

more pain: for the former things are passed away. **5** And [i]he that sat upon the throne said, [k]Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for [l]these words are true and faithful. **6** And he said unto me, [m]It is done. [n]I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. [o]I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. **7** He that overcometh shall inherit [1]all things; and [p]I will be his God, and he shall be my son. **8** [q]But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in [r]the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. **9** And there came unto me one of [s]the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee [t]the bride, the Lamb's wife. **10** And he carried me away [u]in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me [v]that

i Chap. 4. 2, 9; 5. 1; 20. 11.——*k* Isa. 43. 19; 2 Cor. 5. 17.——*l* Chap. 19. 9.——*m* Chap. 16. 17.——*n* Chap. 1. 8; 22. 13.——*o* Isa. 12. 3; 55. 1; John 4. 10, 14; 7. 37; chap. 22. 17.——1 Or, *these things.*

p Zech. 8. 8; Heb. 8. 10.——*q* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10; Gal. 5. 19-21; Eph. 5. 5; 1 Tim. 1. 9; Heb. 12. 14; chap. 22. 15.——*r* Chap. 20. 14, 15.——*s* Chap. 15. 1, 6, 7.——*t* Chap. 19. 7; verse 2.——*u* Chap. 1. 10; 17. 3.——*v* Ezek. 48; verse 2.

give perfect health. **Former things**—The pains, sorrows, deaths, and violences of the old world.

b. *Divine announcement of its blessedness and conditions*, 5–8.

5. **The throne** — What **throne**? Probably the **throne** of chap. iv, 2. That throne of revelation did not disappear with the old earth, (note on iv, 11;) and the throne of judgment, (xx, 11,) appeared simply as one of the visional phenomena, just like any other symbol in the vision. The throne in the New Jerusalem (xxii, 1) has not yet appeared. The throne of revelation, like the angel of the last plagues, (xxii, 8,) continues to the close. **New**—This is the grand, final renovation. **Write these words**—Of this apocalyptic revelation. This is a divine authentication of what the seer is bidden to **write.** Note xxii, 6.

6. **And he**—The sitter **upon the throne. It is done**—The great plan and work of redemption are completed. **Alpha and Omega**—Without a beginning or ending, he is the origin and completion of all things, as of this great plan. **I will give**—The divine speaker in these two verses describes the past and settled, in terms of the future: that is, he places himself at the origin, when the conditions of salvation were laid, utters them in the future tense, and thereby describes the fulfillment that has now and forever taken place. So in xviii, 4–21, (where see notes,) the accomplished fall of Babylon is described in the future tense.

7. **Overcometh**—Against antichrist and the world. **All things**—Better reading, *these* **things.**

8. **The fearful**—The moral coward who **overcometh not**, because he shrinks from fight. Thousands are lost for want of exercising moral courage against the persecutions and contempt of the world. **Unbelieving**—Who deny the reality of the battle and reward, and so never overcome. **Abominable**—Guilty of unnameable vices. **Sorcerers** — Seducers, who win to crime by guilty fascinations.

c. *Description of the capital of the heavenly earth — the New Jerusalem*, 9–27.

9. **One of the seven angels**—As the millennium occurs between this and the last mention of this angel, it was at least a thousand years ago in the event. But in the narrative of the panorama it was, perhaps, an hour. **The bride, the Lamb's wife**—The holy Church, which has now passed through the resurrection to her glorified state. Note xix, 7.

10. **In the spirit**—In the visional trance. **Great and high mountain**—Not as the place on which the city was

great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, **11** [w] Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal; **12** And had a wall great and high, *and*

[w] Chap. 22. 5; verse 23.—[x] Ezek. 48. 31-34.

built, but as the standpoint of his survey of the city. So one gets a view of the old Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.

It would doubtless require a very **high mountain** to afford a clear view of this metropolis of heaven. Apparently on a vast plain of the heavenly land, it rose up before the seer a stupendous luminous cube. It stood upon the surface 375 miles square, and towered up into the pure space 375 miles high! Of this cube the sides were jasper; a softly green transparency. And, as the divine Essence was centralized in the city, so this city cube was a vehicle of his **glory** which radiated a soft, vernal day over this heavenly earth. It was a great Koh-i-noor, throwing light and life over the celestial world. Of this cubic city twelve layers of precious stones formed the basement; each layer of different hued radiance. So that this basement presented to the eye so many horizontal streaks of various brilliant colours. Into each of the four walls there opened three lofty gates; each gate made of one massive pearl. The material of the solid city structure was a *transparent gold*, divided by streets and squares and places. No grander conception of the kind ever proceeded from the genius of poet or painter. And if the extraordinary height seems enormous, we must remember that it is a capitol as well as a capital. The angel-like citizens of the land of the resurrection, to whose will gravitation is subordinate, have no difficulty with its lofty chambers; and here may be laid up the **books** (xx, 12) of the universal library, and the archives of the divine Sovereign over **the nations** of this wide and glorious monarchy.

We have narrated in such order as had [x] twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. **13** [y] On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on

[y] Ezek. 48. 31-34.

might give a united impression of this cube-city. The seer, however, narrates in the order that the perceptions of the distant object dawned upon his eye. Note, i, 12–15. First the general contour of jasper-hued walls, with the gates and foundations, 11–14. Then a regular measurement of its magnitudes, 15–17. Then a detailed picture of the many-coloured foundations, 18–21. Then its illumination, irradiating the nations, who frequent it from afar, 22–27. Last, are the throne, and the tree and river of life, xxii, 1–5. And that closes this apocalypse in triumphal glory. Old Babylon has been sent to hell, and New Jerusalem brought from heaven.

Descending — This resplendent block, itself of mountain size, John sees (so he declares in ver. 2) **descending** from the opened firmament, and taking its position on the plane of the celestial earth.

11. **Having the glory of God**.—Of which it was the vehicle. This, the great fact, is more fully detailed, 23–27 and xxii, 1–5.

12. **Twelve gates — Three, four,** and **twelve** are the predominant numbers; of the last, **the twelve tribes** are expressly said to be the basis. And **the twelve tribes** are symbolically the eternal **Israel** of this eternal city and land. They form **the nations** of its blessed territory. **Twelve angels** — The porters of **the twelve gates,** which are, however, ever open. The angel warders, doubtless, see that the citizens of each tribe from the rural regions enter the gate over which its own tribal *name* is inscribed. There is a divine order, a well organized polity, in this new land and capital. Anarchy belongs to the other place.

13. **Three gates** on each side, al

the west, three gates. **14** And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and [z]in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. **15** And he that talked with me, [a]had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the walls thereof. **16** And the city lieth [b]foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, [c]twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. **17** And he measured the wall thereof, a [d]hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. **18** And the building of the wall of it was *of* jasper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass. **19** [e]And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; **20** The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth,

z Matt. 16. 18; Gal. 2. 9; Eph. 2. 20.—*a* Ezek. 40. 3; Zech. 2. 1; chap. 11. 1.—*b* Ezek. 11. 47; 48. 20.—*c* Ezek. 48. 8, 9.—*d* Chap. 7. 4; 14. 3.—*e* Job 28. 16; Prov. 3. 15; Isa. 54. 11, 12.

ways open, with an angel welcomer at each gate for all the rural excursionists to the capital.

14. **Had twelve** strata of **foundations**—As **the gates** bore the twelve tribal names, these basal strata bear the twelve apostolic names.

15. *The measurement.* **He that talked with me**—The **one of the seven angels** of verse 9. **A golden reed**—Compare xi, 1.

16. **Twelve thousand furlongs** measured the four sides, eight furlongs to the mile, so that its base was 375 miles square. And as **breadth** and **height** were **equal,** it was a cube. It was, therefore, about as truly a house as a **city.** That this double significance is intended is indicated, not only by its being a tabernacle, but by the fact, suggested by Wordsworth, that the Greek word for **gate,** πυλών, as properly signifies the *door* of a house. Nor can we doubt that the structure is an intentional exemplification of the words given by this same St. John, "In my Father's house are many mansions." Alford makes an unnecessary attempt to relieve the city of its cubical shape by assuming that its height is increased by its position being on a height, (like old Jerusalem,) and the measurement being made to the ground. But the exactitude of the statement of the equality of the three dimensions, shows that the cubical form is intended. This house-city is a temple, although it has no temple in it. And so it is (beginning with the idea of a tabernacle) at once a city, a capital, a capitol, a temple, and a royal residence, a palace.

17. The **foursquare** city was lined by a low **foursquare** wall; low, that is, in comparison with the vast height of the city itself. One hundred and forty-four **cubits** are two hundred and sixteen feet. **Measure of a man**—That is, a human, not some great celestial measure, although made by **the angel.**

18. **The building**—That is, the superstructure standing above and upon the foundations.

19. "**Jasper,** as we have seen above, is usually a stone of green transparent colour, with red veins; but there are many varieties. **Sapphire** is of a beautiful azure or sky-blue colour, almost as transparent and glittering as a diamond. **Chalcedony** seems to be a species of the agate, or more probably, the onyx. The onyx of the ancients was probably of a bluish white, and semi-pellucid. The **emerald** was of a vivid green, and next to the ruby in hardness."—*Stuart.*

20. "**Sardonyx** is a mixture of chalcedony and cornelian, which last is of a flesh colour. **Sardius** is probably the cornelian. Sometimes, however, the red is quite vivid. **Chrysolite,** as its name imports, is of a yellow or gold colour, and is pellucid. From this was

beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. **21** And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; [f]and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass. **22** [g]And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. **23** [h]And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof. **24** [i]And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and

[f] Ch. xp. 22. 3.—[g] John 4. 23.—[h] Isa. 24. 23; 60. 19. 20; ch. 22. 5; ver. 11.—[i] Isa. 60. 3, 5, 11; 66. 12.

probably taken the conception of the pellucid gold which constitutes the material of the city. **Beryl** is of a sea-green colour. The **topaz** of the present day seems to be reckoned as *yellow;* but that of the ancients appears to have been *pale green.* **Chrysoprasus,** of a pale yellow and greenish colour, like a scallion. Sometimes it is classed at the present day under *topaz.* **Jacinth,** (hyacinth,) of a deep red or violet colour. **Amethyst**—A gem of great hardness and brilliancy, of a violet colour, and usually found in India.

"In looking over these various classes we find the first four to be of a green or bluish cast; the fifth and sixth, of a red or scarlet; the seventh, yellow; the eighth, ninth, and tenth, of different shades of the lighter green; the eleventh and twelfth, of a scarlet or splendid red. There is *classification,* therefore, in this arrangement—a mixture not dissimilar to the arrangement in the rainbow, with the exception that it is more complex. The splendour of such a foundation, or basis of the wall, admits of no question. As to the order of arrangement of colours, it is difficult to say what rule is followed, and mere mental conception about propriety of order is hardly adequate to guide us. Whether this arrangement is in conformity with some ornamental arrangements of the day which were regarded as beautiful, we cannot positively affirm; yet, in itself, this is highly probable. At all events, the precious stones here named were the same, beyond any reasonable doubt, which are mentioned as set into the breastplate of the Jewish high priest. Exod. xxviii, 17–20; xxxix, 10–13. On these stones in the breastplate, moreover, were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, (Exod. xxviii, 21; xxxix, 14,) just as the names of the twelve apostles are here said to be engraved on the precious stones in the foundation. Verse 14."—*Stuart.*

21. **Twelve pearls**—The material of each gate was a solid pearl. This gave variety to the aspect. **The street**—Πλατεῖα, would include any regular spacing, as street, public square, or city park. You trod on transparent gold in walking its pavement; and you beheld structures of the same transparent gold as you looked around you.

22. **No temple therein**—No place of sacrifice and ritual, for the very God himself was present. Yet the whole was a temple, and for that very reason needed **no temple therein. Are the temple of it**—The divine Presence makes its **temple.**

23. *The lighting of a city* it is very important to know. And no city was ever lighted like this city. It is lighted by the very Light of all lights. **No candle** (xxii, 5) needed to relieve its darkness; no gas, no calcium, no electricity, no luminiferous ether dispersed its night; no **sun,** no **moon,** created its day. The very **glory of God did lighten it,** being in itself one perpetual day.

24. **Of... saved**—Though doubtless giving a true meaning, these words appear to be a spurious reading, inserted by some copyist as an explanatory note. **Shall walk in the light of it**—So powerful is the light of the present divine Essence, so transparent the vehicle in which it is contained, that the radiant day is flung over the vast surface of the heavenly **earth. The nations** of all the redeemed, in their resurrection glory, however ma-

the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. **25** [k] And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for [l] there shall be no night there. **26** [m] And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. **27** And [n] there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination,

[k] Isa. 60. 11.—[l] Isa. 60. 20; Zech. 14. 7; chap. 22. 5.—[m] Verse 24.

[n] Isa. 35. 8; 52. 1; 60. 21; Joel 3. 17; chapter 22. 14, 15.

merous and however distant, **walk in** the noonday **light thereof.** This city is the ample luminary of all the heavenly world. Alford and Wordsworth both speak as if those **kings** were monarchs in our present old earth. This ignores the fact that this **earth** is the heavenly land, beyond the millennium, the resurrection, and the judgment. These all are **kings,** even though they have no subjects; and all are **priests,** even though there be no sacrifice. Yet **kings** may be there bearing rule. It is not clear that there are no degrees of the blessedness and glory of the subjects of the heavenly monarchy. Even in the **new earth** there may be "principalities and powers," rulers over ten cities, and rulers over five cities. These **kings** may be the representatives through whom the spontaneous movements of the heavenly polity are transacted and superintended, so that the sweet harmony and blessed rhythm are ever preserved. Or we may suppose that each *king*, that is, every celestial dweller, has within his own being a *realm*, greater or lesser, of powers, glories, and felicities, infinitely superior to all earthly royalty. Or there may be in the nature and structure of the **new earth,** a common, undivided domain, of which each single heavenly being is a most rich and powerful proprietor, user, and *king*. Then what a royalty, is it not, to **walk** the golden streets, through the very dense divine **glory,** and as a prince to behold the face of the Monarch of the Universe! **Bring their glory and honour into it**—Neither **the nations** nor **the kings of** this heavenly earth dwell in the capital. They come from far, many of them, and then they bring not trade, or manufactures, or garden truck, into town. But **they bring their glory,** (a somewhat doubtful reading,) their own affluence of magnificent being, history, and character; and their **honour,** that is, their adoration, for the resident King of kings in his capital. Even in this appears, perhaps, a difference of ranks and honours. Some kings are farther distant in the **earth** than others. On the very distant realms perhaps a dimmer **glory** shines. More seldom visits, less amount of glory brought, less full vision of the royal countenance, may be allowed to some **kings** than others. When Whitefield was asked by a bigoted follower if he expected to see Wesley in heaven, "Yes," answered the great-hearted evangelist, "unless he should stand so much nearer the throne that I cannot descry him."

25. **The** twelve pearl **gates** or doors, each three approachable from the four points of compass, shall never be shut. The twice twelve tribal **nations** shall ever find it **day,** and ever find open **gates.** The **gates** of gospel grace are ever open here on earth, the gates of the New Jerusalem shall ever be open to the dwellers of the heavenly earth. **For**—Reason for mentioning **day** only, **there shall be no night.** The divine glory never remits, never dims. No revolving of the orb renders the opposite hemisphere dark. No north pole caps the arctic with ice. No glaciers chill the air, no night-shade broods with malaria, or spreads her cover over crime. Here we may read into this description the beautiful passage, vii, 14–17. See our notes there.

26. **The glory and honour**—Not only of the kings but also of **the nations,** the collective peoples, shall pour into God's royal capital.

27. But open as are these gates, there is a terrible yet salutary exclusion. As this city is glorious in structure, and most gloriously lighted, so its society is pure. **Any thing that defileth**—

or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's [o] book of life.

CHAPTER XXII.

AND he showed me [a] a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. **2** [b] In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* [c] the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the

[o] Phil. 4. 3; chapter 3. 5; 13. 8; 20. 12. — [a] Ezek. 47. 1; Zech. 14. 8.

[b] Ezek. 47. 12; chapter 21. 21. — [c] Gen. 2. 9; chapter 2. 7.

No filthy object shall disgust the sense, or spread miasms through the pure atmosphere. **Whatsoever** — Rather, *no person*, as the change to the masculine implies, that worked **abomination** or flagitious vice. The elegant debauchee is not admitted into good society. No author of any baseness—of any offense against chastity, decency, honour, or uprightness—**shall enter.** They have no citizenship in the heavenly earth, but are assigned their abode in a darker region. **Maketh a lie**—Manufacturers of a damnable dogma, deceiving men's souls; utterers of slanders, destroying men's characters; writers of fictions, depraving men's imaginations. The authors of the theory of wickedness, great "philosophers" though esteemed, take share with the practisers of the license they have preached. **Written**—It is not necessary to record your name as at a modern hotel. It was **written** at the day of judgment analysis. **Book of life**—Ephesus had its "town-clerk," and this city has its registry of citizens; nay, a record, a census-book, of all the names of the individuals of all the nations of the heavenly earth. Augustus sent forth the decree that all the world should be enrolled for taxation. The august monarch of heaven has an enrollment of all the inhabitants of heaven.

It may be asked, Are these chapters a true description of heaven? We may ask in reply, What higher heaven can corporeal and spiritual man conceive than is here described? On a transfigured earth, immortal man walks in the atmosphere of the divine Essence, in the midst of a society of holy beings, in sight of the glorious palace of the present God. What can the sublimest human concept on imagine more celestial?

CHAPTER XXII.

d. *Its river and tree of life— Close of Apocalypse*, 1–5.

1. **And**—The entire passage, xxi, 1–xxii, 5, should be read as one unbroken description. **He**—The angel interpreter of xxi, 9, 17. **Clear**—Rather, *bright, radiant.* **Throne**—The royal seat of the eternal KING. We may suppose its position central, the most illustrious point in the luminous capital.

2. **On either** (*each*) **side of the river—The river** cleaves the street lengthwise into two long strips; so that there is a breadth of street on each side of the stream. On both the banks of **the river, the tree of life** grows in rows, extending in line between street and river. **Twelve manner of fruits**—Rather, **twelve** *fruitages*, or (as Stuart) *fruit-harvests.* The idea is not that there were different species of **fruits**, but successive crops.

The twelve tribal **nations** of the celestial earth have a salubrious clime and a lofty, luminous capital, with a gate for each tribe into it, labelled with the tribal name. On what immortal fruit do these immortals live? The **tree of life** furnishes twelve fruit-harvests a year, a harvest for each tribe. Here is a beautiful coincidence between the natural and symbolic **twelve.**

But are the **river** and the **tree** confined to the capital? And must **the nations**, each one, pay an annual visit to the capital to obtain its harvest, just as the old Jews paid their annual visit to old Jerusalem at the Passover? And is it at these visits that **the kings** and **nations** (xxi, 24, 26) **bring their glory and honour into it?** Or does **the river** flow into all parts of **the**

leaves of the tree *were* [d] for the healing of the nations. **3** And [e] there shall be no more curse: [f] but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: **4** And [g] they shall see his face; and [h] his name *shall be* in their foreheads. **5** [i] And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for [k] the Lord God giveth them light: [l] and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, [m] These sayings *are* faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets [n] sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must

d Chap. 21. 24. — *e* Zech. 14. 11. — *f* Ezek. 48. 35. — *g* Matt. 5. 8; 1 Cor. 13. 12; 1 John 3. 2. *h* Chap. 3. 12; 14. 1.

i Chap. 21. 23, 25. — *k* Psa. 36. 9; 84. 11. — *l* Dan. 7. 27; Rom. 5. 17; 2 Tim. 2. 12; chap. 3. 21. — *m* Chap. 19. 9; 21. 5. — *n* Chap. 1. 1.

earth, refreshing **the nations** with renewed immortality? The former seems to be the view indicated by most of the statements. At the same time, this presents a pleasing idea of movement, and of perpetual reverence to the resident King. And, as the **fruit** of the **tree** is the ambrosia, and the **river** furnishes the nectar, so the very **leaves** of the tree are a medicine, warding off every decay, disease, or lesion. So the **tree of life** in the original Eden was the source of Adam's immortality, exclusion from which was exposure to certainty of decay, disease, and death. Gen. iii, 22–24. Here, then, is paradise restored. The resurrectional immortality—the immortality of body with soul—seems conditioned on the tree and river of life, the source of which is God's own throne.

3. **No more curse** — The primal **curse** of death upon man is removed by the **river** and **tree** of immortality.

4. **Shall see his face**—This is that "vision of God" of which theologians have much spoken, constituting the highest glory of heaven.

5. The seer reiterates the pleasing thought, **no night there,** xxi, 25. No repose is needed by these immortal frames; no debility weighs down the limbs, no stupor closes the eyes.

For ever and ever—The length of the **reign** of the saved is measured by the same terms as the length of the doom of the lost, xx, 10. And the Greek word for **reign** is the verb for the Greek word for *king;* **they shall** *be kings for ever.* Hence, in one sense at least, all the inhabitants of heaven are **kings of the** heavenly **earth.**

The book of this Revelation is here properly closed. But its genuineness and transcendent value and dignity are now to be attested by the principal personages through whom it is delivered to the Church and world.

EPILOGUE—FOUR ATTESTATIONS TO THE TRUTH OF THIS DIVINE APOCALYPSE, 6–19.

1. *By the* ANGEL *briefly reiterating the divine endorsement,* 6.

6. **He**—The interpreting angel of verse 1, reaffirming the words of God, xxi, 5. **These sayings**—The utterances and revelations of this book. He who was commissioned agent pronounces that the apocalypse by him delivered is both a genuine revelation and a truthful doctrine. As a mere instrument his testimony is brief, modest, and subordinate to God's.

2. *By* JOHN, *recapitulating the fact of God's sending his revealing angel, and his own over-reverence to the angel,* 6–9.

6. **And**—That John's own words commence here is evident from the fact that he really repeats at this close the words by him uttered at the commencement of the Apocalypse, i, 1, 3. John's words are introduced with the Hebraistically repeated **and,** as in verses **10,** 12, and 17.

The usual method of commentators is to make this whole verse (6) the words of the angel; to make John here re-perform in literal act his over-reverence in xix, 10, and to make the angel resume at verse 10 and continue to 15. This is in many ways objectionable. It makes John mechanically and stolidly re-commit an already corrected blunder. It makes the angel speak at full length the words of God in his own person,

shortly be done. **7** °Behold, I come quickly: ᵖblessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. **8** And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, ᵠI fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. **9** Then saith he unto me, ʳSee *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. **10** ˢAnd he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: ᵗfor the time is at hand. **11** ᵘHe that is unjust, let him

o Chap. 3. 11; verses 10, 12, 20.—p Chap. 1. 3.—q Chap. 19. 10.—r Chap. 19. 10.

s Dan. 8. 26; 12. 4, 9; chap. 10. 4.—t Chap. 1. 3.—u Ezek. 3. 27; Dan. 12. 10; 2 Tim. 3. 13.

as if he himself were God; an inadmissible assumption, inaccurately supported by Düsterdieck by the precedent of xi, 3, where he incorrectly assumes that "my" is uttered by the angel in the name of God.

We make John's words begin in verse 6, adding an implied *saying*, in italics, at the close of that verse. John thus narrates in 6 and 7 God's sending the revealing angel to him and the promise of quickly coming; and in 8 and 9 he reiterates how over-gratefully he received this angelic communication. Thus **saw and heard** in verse 8 is antithetical to **sent to show** in verse 6, so that the thought of *the sending by God* is transmitted down to verse 10, where **he** refers to **God** of verse 6. The entire of 10–15 is then spoken by God. **Holy prophets** — Preferable reading, **of** *the spirits of* **the holy prophets**; that is, of their *spirits* as instruments of his revealing work. By this solemn phrase John places his apocalypse on the same high level with the Old Testament, as conscious that it takes equal rank in the sacred canon. He is aware that he is making New Testament. Note, verse 19.

7. **Behold** — A part of God's **sent** prophetic message. **Blessed** — See note on i, 3.

8. **Saw...and heard**—What **God sent his angel to show. These things** — The apocalyptic showings and sayings. **I fell down**—Re-narrating here the fact of xix, 10, to show that so truly divine seemed this apocalypse that he came near to worshipping the mere messenger that brought it.

9. **Saith he**—This apocalypse was no mere angel apocalypse, for the angel himself referred it to God.

3. *By* GOD, *bringing before us and realizing the judgment as immediate*, 10–15.

10. **And he saith**—Who **saith?** The connexion, as well as the entire tenor of the words said, show that it is none other than **the Lord God** of verse 6 who **sent** the angel so over-honoured by John. **God** sent the angel; John **saw, heard,** and almost *worshipped;* and then God **saith** as follows.

God testifies to this apocalypse most strongly, by forbidding it to be sealed up, and by furnishing a vivid realization of its immediate fulfilment.

In the words of God which follow, the seer is in spirit transferred to the last hours and minutes before the impending judgment-advent. Rather, we may say, that the advent is conceptually brought to the immediate future. See note, i, 7. That the judgment-advent is not taught to be literally **at hand,** is certain from the very fact that the millennium (xx) is made to intervene. It is in God's own view that the divine coming is just at hand. See 2 Pet. iii, 8. **Seal not. . .at hand** — The **book** was to be kept unsealed and ready for the reading of all, as the event is virtually **at hand** to every human reader.

11. As the words i, 7 conceive the advent as really present, so the words of this verse conceive it so near that probation is closed, and moral change impossible. As there is a moment at every closing life when character and destiny are fixed, so there is a moment of the closing world-history when the fixedness of eternity has already arrived. Repent? It is too late! **Unjust**—Referring to offences against

be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. **12** [v]And, behold, I come quickly; and [w]my reward *is* with me, [x]to give every man according as his work shall be. **13** [y]I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. **14** [z]Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right [a]to the tree of life, [b]and may enter in through the gates into the city. **15** For [c]without *are* [d]dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. **16** [e]I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. [f]I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* [g]the bright and morning star. **17** And the Spirit and [h]the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. [i]And let him that is athirst

v Ver. 7.—*w* Isa. 40. 10; 62. 11.—*x* Rom. 2. 6; 14. 12; ch. 20. 12.—*y* Isa. 41. 4; 44. 6; 48. 12; ch. 1. 8, 11; 21. 6.—*z* Dan. 12. 12; 1 John 3. 24.—*a* Ver. 2; ch. 2. 7.—*b* Ch. 21. 27.—*c* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10; Gal. 5. 19–21; Col. 3. 6; chap. 9. 20, 21; 21. 8.—*d* Phil. 3. 2.—*e* Ch. 1. 1.—*f* Ch. 5. 5.—*g* Num. 24. 17; Zech. 6. 12; 2 Pet. 1. 19; ch. 2. 28.—*h* Ch. 21. 2, 9.—*i* Isa. 55. 1; John 7. 37; ch. 21. 6.

equity. **Filthy**—Referring to shameful iniquities, offences against chastity, decency, and honour. **Righteous**—Moral rectitude. **Holy**—Implying spiritual consecration, including moral rectitude. **Let him**—There is no space for the reformation of the evil, or the apostasy of the good.

13. **I am Alpha**—Assuredly words spoken by no angel.

14. **Have right**—All these expressions point to the **tree of life** as the *final reward of a successful probation;* and show that not the millennium is meant, but the final heaven beyond the universal resurrection. **May enter...gates**—May be allowed a life in the **new earth,** of which entrance to the capital is a **right.**

15. **Without are** *the* **dogs,** with the article. Not meaning that the **dogs** are admitted into **the new earth,** while excluded from the city. The Greek word for **without** is used for moral separateness in 1 Cor. v, 12, 13; Col. iv, 5; 1 Thess. iv, 12. In Acts xxvi, 11, it means out of the country, even to foreign cities. The foreign and distant place assigned for characters represented by *the* **dogs** is specified in xxi, 8, with which passage compare this verse.

4. *By* JESUS, *reaffirming his coming, denouncing the corrupters of the record,* 16–19.

16. **I Jesus**—Giving now in his own person his attestation to this book as really from his commissioned **angel. In the churches**—Greek, επι, literally, *upon;* but *upon* as an audience on whom the utterances are expended as to them addressed, ii, 7. So in x, 11, the same preposition (rendered in our translation **before**) does not signify that the peoples named would be the subject of the prophecies, (as Düsterdieck insists,) but would be the object of their direct address. **The churches**—First the seven Churches of Asia, and through them to **the churches** of all lands and ages. **Root and the offspring**—Note on v, 5.

The bright and morning star—A beautiful image of the Saviour, presented by St. John here on the threshold of the celestial world. This new world is the morning of our endless existence; in its gray dawn happy is the man upon whose faith beams this **bright and morning star,** the promise and harbinger of an eternal day.

17. **Come**—To the promise of the **morning star** that he will **come quickly,** a welcoming response is now by the **star,** Jesus, heard. It sounds like the plaudit of a happy audience to a most welcome speaker, interposed without unwelcomely interrupting his speech. It is the united response of **the Spirit** in the heart of **the bride,** (the Church, xxi, 9,) and of the bride herself to the bridegroom, **Come!** And every one that **heareth** that divine

come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. **18** For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, [k] If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: **19** And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, [l] God shall take away his part [1] out of the book of life, and out of [m] the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book. **20** He which testifieth these things saith, [n] Surely I come quickly: [o] Amen. [p] Even so, come, Lord Jesus. **21** [q] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

k Deut. 4. 2; 12. 32; Prov. 30. 6.—*l* Exod. 32. 33; Psa. 69. 28; chap. 3. 5; 13. 8.—1 Or, *from the tree of life.*

m Chapter 21. 2.—*n* Verse 12.—*o* John 21. 25. —*p* 2 Timothy 4. 8.—*q* Romans 16. 20, 24; 2 Thessalonians 3. 18.

promise has privilege to re-echo to him that same **Come!** The blessed final result will be that, when He, the **morning star,** has **come,** every redeemed soul **that is athirst,** and **whosoever will,** will be permitted to enter the golden city and stand on the banks of the river, (xxii, 1,) and **take the water of life freely.** See our note on verse 20.

18. **For**—This word is pronounced spurious by the best authorities. **I testify**—Who, here, testifies? The **testifieth** of verse 20 shows that it is Jesus. **Add unto these things**—With purpose to corrupt the apostolic truth. The words refer not so much to additions to the text of the manuscript, as to the adding unholy falsehood to holy truth. **God shall add unto him**—Remaining unrepentant.

19. **Take away**—Seeking to destroy the truth, or undermine its authority. **His part**—Either in possession, or the **part** he would have had had he been true. As the Apocalypse is rich with all the truths of the New Testament, so no one can impugn its doctrines without impugning the Gospel; and to impugn the Gospel is to impugn his own salvation. John, as before said, is conscious that he is making New Testament; he is doubtless conscious that he is closing the canon. But we cannot quite say that he includes the whole canon under the safe-guard of these maledictions otherwise than by the scope of analogy. Note, v, 14.

5. *John's final welcome to the Coming* —Benediction, 20, 21.

20. **Testifieth these things**—Jesus, who attests his sending the revelation, and the deep danger of corrupting or undermining his truth. **Come, Lord Jesus**—**Come** with that coming which brings the final glory. Note verse 17.

21. **Be with you all**—The true reading more comprehensively is, *with all the saints.* And so our seer, whose unspeakable honour it was to close the sacred canon, dismisses the whole Church of all the then coming ages with the apostolic benediction. To which, at this, the solemn close of his own labour, the humble commentator adds his own deep Amen.

THE END.

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